

LABOUR MONTHLY

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

A CALL TO THE NATION

THE ROAD TO LABOUR UNITY
R. Palme Dutt

CASABLANCA AND AFTER
Quæstor

VANSITTART AND THE LABOUR
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THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN INDIA
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THE ENGLISH POPULAR MASSES
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DOCUMENT OF THE MONTH

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A
CALL
TO THE
NATION

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Our S.O.S. of last month had the desired and very necessary result of more than doubling the contributions received during February, although we are still short of the target of £100. A comrade who is already a regular guarantor burst into our office one Saturday morning, saying: "I must do something to celebrate the final victory at Stalingrad." So he left us a five-pound note in honour of "February 2, 1943." Another gives his opinion of LABOUR MONTHLY, and really we couldn't put it better ourselves: "The enclosed is a slight attempt to express in kind, appreciation for the good things in your paper: highly instructive articles, lucid, vigorous and resolute of purpose. Of a clarity, and understanding, far surpassing anything achieved by all the other contemporary Left Journals put together. Regular reading of the MONTHLY clears away all confusions, and helps one to be capable of giving instruction to the more politically backward."

In the next three months Discussion Groups will all be making a very special effort on behalf of the Development Fund. Turn to page 3 of cover to learn more about the new competition, with really worth-while prizes, in which all Groups, large or small, recent or long-standing, can take part.

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A Call to the Nation

[This statement was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain on February 21, 1943.]

HOW long is the contrast between the incessant activity and victories of the Red Army and the absence of the Second Front in Western Europe on the part of the British and American armies to continue?

How long is Britain's main preoccupation to be with post-war issues, while the Red Army is fighting as no army ever fought before?

How long are internal political divisions to continue, because of the absence of an offensive military policy, that can enable British and American armies to strike the same kind of decisive blows in the West as the Red Army is striking in the East?

These are the questions to which millions of people in Britain are demanding an answer.

It is the responsibility of the Government that the present situation has developed. It is its responsibility immediately to change this situation by an offensive policy and leadership that can fully unite Britain for the stern battles ahead.

Stalingrad, Rostov and Kharkov! These stupendous Soviet victories over Hitler have amazed the world and completely transformed the entire war situation.

These mighty achievements of the Red Army, driving back and crippling the main Nazi forces—enormously strengthened as they were by the transfer of crack Nazi divisions from France—have placed in our hands a glorious opportunity for launching simultaneous blows that can ensure the decisive defeat of the Nazi armies now.

The immediate opening of the Second Front in Western Europe is now the supreme duty of the British and American peoples.

No other kind of offensive action in any other theatre of war can be allowed to become the alibi or the substitute for the Second Front in the West.

Only at our peril dare we tolerate a position in which the Churchill Government fails to rise to the full measure of the priceless new opportunities that the Red Army has opened up for Britain.

Only the Second Front can lessen the sacrifice, shorten and win the war.

The Soviet people, inspiring the whole world by the grandeur of their single-handed victories over the most powerful Nazi armies and its satellites, have the right to look with confidence to British action that will make the Anglo-Soviet Treaty a reality in deeds. Their colossal and selfless sacrifices give them also the right to demand that such action is taken now.

The peoples of Europe, fighting with a heroism and sacrifice that their Fascist gaolers and executioners are unable to crush, are also waiting impatiently for the moment of our landing in Europe, so that they can play their full part in the liberation of all Europe from Nazi tyranny.

This is the hour and the day to strike new decisive blows from the West. Every hour and every day now counts.

The Prime Minister's speech after the Casablanca Conference has shown that the forces, in men and equipment, now fully exist for the invasion of Europe.

He stated that Britain and the United States are now "very heavily armed." They are possessed of "very powerful and growing forces." The problem is "to bring these forces into action."

The Prime Minister's speech has shown that despite the grave character of the U-boat menace, the shipping situation is stronger than it was six months ago, or at the time of the African landings. It is thus evident that the shipping situation does not prevent the immediate invasion of Europe.

The decisive blows against the U-boats can only be struck by an Allied offensive in Western Europe.

The Prime Minister also declared that the Casablanca Conference had declared for a policy that meant the unconditional surrender of the Fascist Powers.

But this unconditional surrender will never come automatically, never be brought about by secondary military offensives.

The main war machine of Hitlerite Germany is in Europe. There alone can it be smashed and utterly destroyed. There alone can the decisive military struggles take place, in which the whole man-power resources of Britain, America and the Soviet Union are striking their decisive blows together, fully and on time.

This is the meaning of the Second Front in the West.

It is not enough to recognise the necessity for the eventual invasion of Europe. Speed is essential. Our offensive must combine now with the Soviet offensive. No further excuses for delay can be tolerated.

The advance of the armies of the United Nations and the nearer prospect of the final downfall of Fascism, is accompanied by increased activity of the reactionary pro-Fascist Munichite elements who fear the victory of the people over Fascism. This increased activity is shown in their vote against the Government on the Catering Bill, in their mobilisation of opposition to putting through the Beveridge Report; in the attack on Joint Production Committees by the Big Monopolists; in the declarations of monopoly capitalist sections with regard to post-war policy, seeking to safeguard their position against democratic advance.

Under cover of these reactionaries, we see the shameless propaganda of Fascism's Fifth Column in Britain, who are pouring out their anti-Semitic poison and advocating coming to terms with Hitler.

The release of hundreds of Mosleyite disciples of Hitler has enabled them to raise their heads once more, as the dese-

cration of the Lenin Memorial and the activities of the British National Party have shown.

What can be the consequences of the policy of the reactionaries and pro-Fascists? It leads directly to a position where we fail to take advantage of the victories of the Red Army, it prolongs the war and increases the sacrifice, it spreads doubt and confusion, it destroys the unity of the nation, all of which are meant to lead to a position where there is a change for the worse in the leadership of the Government so that Britain can come to terms with Hitler.

In this situation, the Communist Party calls on every man and woman to urge the Government to carry out this policy:

The Second Front

The immediate opening of a Second Front in Europe, and the relentless carrying through of every measure necessary to make the Second Front victorious.

Africa

Speed up the African offensive to eliminate every Nazi and Italian Fascist from Africa. Strengthen the united anti-Fascist front in North Africa by the removal of all Vichy elements from commanding positions, by the enforcement of the democratic laws of the French Republic, by the establishment in accordance with the proposals of General de Gaulle and the Fighting French, of a representative French national anti-Fascist authority, uniting all Frenchmen in the common struggle for liberation, by the release of all anti-Fascist prisoners, including members of the International Brigade.

Production and Man-power

The total mobilisation of Britain's productive and man-power resources, to guarantee an adequate supply of all kinds of war materials and man-power for the armed forces.

The more efficient planning of production, and more consultation with the Joint

Production Committees on all questions of production, concentration, transfer and de-reservation.

Support for every measure needed to secure the concentration of man-power for the key industries of coal, shipbuilding, tank, aircraft and transport, safeguarding the interests and conditions of the workers where transfers of labour are necessary to obtain the required production and the strengthening of the armed forces.

Support for better rates of pay, allowances, pensions, training and improved opportunities of promotion for men and women in the armed forces.

Food

The concentration of shipping for direct war needs, for the transport of troops and munitions and of raw materials for war production. We must eliminate unnecessary imports, carrying through more serious and effective all-round rationing, including bread rationing. A greatly extended food production programme must be pressed forward in the coming year, with the extension of the Women's Land Army and the greater use of voluntary and part-time labour, youth service and holiday camps on the land.

Social Legislation

The Communist Party calls upon the Government to accept and operate the Beveridge Plan, and immediately to pass the Catering Bill, without any concessions, to the reactionary forces who seek to strengthen their profit-making grip on the nation, now that more favourable opportunities are opened up for winning the war.

Against the Pro-Fascists

The Communist Party calls for the banning of the British National Party; the tightening up of Regulation 18B against all pro-Fascists, and for making the dissemination of anti-Semitism a criminal offence.

India

To win the full co-operation of the Indian people, the Communist Party calls upon the Government to release all political anti-Fascist prisoners in India and enter into immediate negotiations with Indian political leaders, both of Congress and other sections, with a view to the formation of a fully representative Indian National Government.

Strengthen the Government

The Communist Party calls upon the Prime Minister immediately to reorganise the Government so that it is composed only of capable and avowed anti-Fascists, who are fully prepared to organise all necessary measures to put the policy of unconditional surrender of the Axis powers into immediate deeds.

It is essential that the Labour movement should have more direct representation in the Government and its leading positions.

Real National Unity

In order to carry through a real win-the-war policy and to combat all the manoeuvres of the reactionaries and pro-Fascists, it is urgently necessary to strengthen national unity. This can only be done if the Prime Minister is prepared to face up to existing weaknesses in the Government and its policy.

The dissatisfaction of the people with the delaying policy of the Government, and with the method of selecting candidates of national unity in by-elections, has given an opportunity to disruptive elements to exploit this discontent for their own advantages and to split national unity. This is not the path to democratic anti-Fascist advance, but to political demoralisation and disintegration, and plays into the hands of the reactionary pro-Fascist forces.

It is essential to be on guard against the disruptive splitting tactics displayed in recent by-elections of so-called "Independents" and of the Common Wealth

Party. Under cover of left-sounding and "Socialist" phrases, they oppose the Government, disrupt national unity against Fascism and split the Labour movement, thus helping the reactionaries and pro-Fascists to develop their campaign for a change in Government leadership in which the policy of the unconditional surrender of Hitler will give place to coming to terms with Hitler.

Affiliation to the Labour Party

The heart of national unity against Fascism must be a powerful, united, active, Labour movement. Therefore the campaign for the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party needs to be vigorously supported by all Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative organisations to ensure its adoption at the coming Labour Party Conference. This is the guarantee of the most effective prosecution of the war, victory over Fascism, and of united progress when victory has been won.

* * *

The gigantic battles that are now taking place against Fascism must inspire us to greater efforts than we have ever known to ensure the full co-operation of our peoples and the speediest establishment of the Second Front in Western Europe.

This moment is the greatest opportunity in the whole fight against Fascism. Let us rise to the height of our opportunity. Let us see that our campaign is such as to arouse the whole nation as never before to go into battle in the spirit of the offensive and of victory.

This is the day and this is the hour to strike new decisive blows from the West. Blows that can eliminate the Fascist filth from the world for ever. Let us face cheerfully and proudly whatever lies before us in the same glorious manner as every man, woman and child in the Soviet Union and occupied Europe. In this way we can open a new future for the working-class movement and the peoples of the world.

The Road to Labour Unity

The Problem of Affiliation

by R. PALME DUTT

The urgency of the present war situation, the fight for the Second Front in Europe to be opened without further delay, and the dangerous tendencies in the political situation in Britain, all make now of extreme urgency the achievement of unity of the Labour movement by the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party. Accordingly, this month, in place of the usual Notes of the Month, we print a special article on Affiliation in relation to the acute problems of the present political situation and the developing currents within the Labour movement.

WILL the Labour Party accept the affiliation of the Communist Party at its coming Conference this June?

The importance of this question is equally recognised by supporters and by opponents of affiliation, as, indeed, by all sections of opinion and political parties. The declarations of the Communist Party and of the Labour Party Executive have received wide publicity. The arguments for and against have been freely canvassed. The volume of support already won for affiliation indicates that this proposal, which has long been before the Labour movement, has now, with the development of events, clearly come within the region of practical politics. It is therefore evident that every member of the Labour movement will need to give serious and fresh consideration, irrespective of previous viewpoints, to the merits of this issue, in order to reach a decision which is bound to have far-reaching effects.

Why has this issue come to the forefront in the present situation? Why is it urgent to settle to-day—when there are already so many urgent tasks of the war and problems of the Labour movement to be faced?

The answer is that it has come to the forefront to-day precisely because of the experience and plain needs of the present situation. A situation which has obviously compelled the co-operation of the anti-Communist Churchill with the Communist Stalin, of the anti-Communist Sir Walter Citrine with the Communist Shvernik, of the former persecutor of the Communists, Chiang Kai-

shek, with the Communist Mao Tse Tung, of the Liberal President Benes with the Communist Beuer, of the Conservative De Gaulle with the Socialist Gouin and the Communist Grenier, or of the Labour Party leader, Attlee, with the Liberal Party leader, Sinclair and the Conservative Party leader, Churchill, inevitably gives rise to the question why it should still remain impossible—the solitary exception—for Attlee and Bevin to find a basis of co-operation with Pollitt and Gallacher to serve the common interests of the Labour movement. The plain man or woman of the local Labour organisations, of the same Trade Union branch, of the same shop stewards' committee, working together at the bench, or facing danger together as comrades in the armed forces, find it difficult to be satisfied with answers which delve into the historical past, but appear to evade the plain issues of the present.

The issue is urgent to settle now, precisely because of its practical bearing on the present tasks of the war and the present problems of the Labour movement, no less than for the future.

The present political situation and war situation powerfully underline this urgency. What is the heart of the problems which face us to-day? At every turn there is a conflict between the urgent needs of the war and the democratic anti-Fascist wishes of the overwhelming majority of the people, on the one side, and, on the other, the obstruction and sabotage of powerful reactionary influences and interests which hamper the effective prosecution of the war, intrigue to promote policies of conciliation to Fascism, spread

anti-Soviet propaganda, and hinder full mobilisation and progressive advance at home. The gathering offensive of these reactionary interests threatens also post-war advance.

Twenty months after the British-Soviet Alliance the effective combined action which that Alliance made possible for the final defeat of Fascism is not yet realised, and the war is in consequence prolonged. The Red Army still fights alone in Europe, and the Second Front is still delayed. The offensive in Northern Africa is endangered and delayed by the costly consequences of Darlanism—still rampant even after the death of Darlan and the partial turn of policy which has all too slowly begun. Goring openly appeals to "the gentlemen" against "the Bolsheviks," and proclaims his hopes in "clear-thinking men in London." Outrages by Fascists increase: bodies like the British National Party are given free play. Fuel rationing is wrecked, after the Government has declared it essential; bread rationing is indefinitely postponed. Powerful industrialists, like Nuffield and Herbert, come out in opposition to the Joint Production Committees, after the functioning of these Joint Production Committees has helped to raise war production fifty per cent. in the past year. Even such a modest measure as the Catering Bill is met with an opposition vote, which mustered the majority of Conservative M.P.s participating in the vote, and the very considerable majority of Conservative M.P.s outside the Government. The insurance companies and vested interests are able to trample underfoot the overwhelming popular demand for the enactment of the Beveridge Report, thus compelling the Labour representatives to register an opposition vote; and after the Government's declaration of policy, and its victory in the lobbies, Prudential shares went up two and a half million pounds, and the shares of all insurance companies went up by five million pounds.

The Labour Party is confronted with sharp dilemmas in the face of this situation, so that the Parliamentary Labour Party finds itself officially leading a vote in opposition to the Labour Ministers, while the principal Labour spokesman is assigned the role to rally the Conservatives against the official criticism of the

Parliamentary Labour Party. Such a contradictory situation inevitably weakens the basis of the coalition against Fascism, and thus opens the road to dangerous forces. The popular indignation, and concentration of Labour attention, on domestic and post-war issues, in opposition to the reactionary offensive, increases the danger of diversion of attention from the decisive issues of the war, and especially from the fight for the Second Front, which is the governing issue of the whole situation and decisive for the entire future.

The aim of the reactionaries is plain. The coincidence of the reactionary offensive with the advance of the Red Army in Eastern Europe, and with the closer prospect of victory over Fascism, is inescapable. It is the same forces which hinder the Second Front and oppose progress at home, just as they protect the Fascists in Britain (18B agitation) or support reactionary policy in India.

The reactionary forces begin their open opposition on domestic issues, with a view to prepare the ground, if they succeed in their work of political disintegration, to advance to the international plane, that is, to their policies of conciliation to Fascism and the extension of Darlanism to all Axis Europe, including Germany, as they already begin to hint in their public utterances. The strategic aim of the increasing activities from the right, both in Britain and the United States, on the basis of a hundred domestic issues to weaken the coalition against Fascism, rallied around Churchill and Roosevelt, is finally directed to defeat the policy of the "unconditional surrender" of the Fascist powers, proclaimed by Churchill and Roosevelt, and ensure the victory of reaction both in Europe and at home.

The key aim of the reactionary manoeuvre is to disintegrate the present coalition, weaken the progressive forces in the coalition, discredit the Labour Ministers and provoke Labour into opposition. This manoeuvre of the reactionaries is assisted by the role of the Independents, and of such organisations as the Commonwealth Party, in the by-elections, which seek to exploit the popular indignation against the reactionary offensive in order to oppose the Government, split the coalition against Fascism, and also in the practical effect split the

Labour movement, as shown in Bristol, with the expulsion of the seven Labour councillors.

This is a grave, dangerous and urgent situation. It is the political weakness at home that is the basic cause of the delays, setbacks and slow progress of the war action of Britain and the United States, which is in such glaring contrast to the mighty advance of the Soviet armies against the common enemy. Yet never was there such a moment for the progressive anti-Fascist forces of the world to be at the height of their action and power, if we seize our opportunities.

What is the way forward? It does not lie in disrupting the coalition against Fascism, weakening the Government or endeavouring at this critical stage of the war to open up a conflict between Conservatism and Labour or Conservatism and the Left. That way plays straight into the hands of the reactionary pro-Fascists.

The way forward can only lie in the strengthening of the progressive forces within the coalition and within the Coalition Government. But this means, above all, the strengthening of the Labour movement, of the role and power, the organised strength and active campaign of the Labour movement throughout the country, and thereby of its influence in the Government and in the direction of policy. The mass stirring and ferment, the increased consciousness and confidence of the people, and the leftward swing of opinion, which has accompanied the Soviet advance and the prospect of victory over Fascism, needs to be led and organised along a positive path of advance: not along futile paths of disruption or sectional divisions, nor to be dissipated in blind absorption in a hundred secondary domestic or post-war issues, but as a united, powerful and responsible movement to fulfil the role of leader and driving force in all the tasks of the war, in the fight for the Second Front, in the fight for the democratic anti-Fascist conduct of the war, no less than in progressive advance at home. But this task is impossible of accomplishment so long as disunity saps the vitality of the Labour movement; so long as the main stream of mass awakening, a great part of which is at present visibly towards Communism, is artificially cut off from the

mass of the Labour movement in the political field, to the common loss of both sides in what could be a united advance. The strengthening of the Labour movement requires the unity of the Labour movement. Hence the decisive importance of the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party at the present moment.

It will be readily agreed, both by supporters and opponents of affiliation, that, if a basis of co-operation could be satisfactorily established in this way, then such a unity of the Labour movement would mean a strengthening of the unity of the people for all the tasks of the war, a strengthening of the Labour movement in relation to the Government and current political questions, a strengthening of the effective conduct of the war for speedy victory, and a powerful influence on the character of the peace. It would mean the most effective bulwark against the offensive of reaction both during the war and after.

The primary importance and urgency of affiliation thus arises in relation to the present immediate situation of the war and the political relations of forces in this country.

But the importance of affiliation is no less outstanding for the future prospect after victory, for the whole future of the British Labour movement, and for the whole future of British politics.

On a longer view, it may be said that in this question is being concretely determined, in a preliminary form, the whole future of the British people during the coming critical decade of transition from the old social order to the new—how far that transition shall take place as harmoniously as possible through the strength and leadership of a united Labour movement, or how far, through disunity, the tragedy of the two inter-war decades may be repeated in an even more disastrous form, as the economic bankruptcy of the old capitalist order becomes even more powerfully demonstrated in the changed position of Britain in the post-war world, giving rise to stormy episodes and harsh issues, and even, if unity is not attained, to the possibility of the temporary victory of ugly forms of reaction.

Nothing less than this—the immediate and also the longer-term future of the British people, equally in the war and in

the character of the peace, and in the coming epoch of decisive social change—is involved in this seemingly organisational question of the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party.

In posing the question in this form, emphasis is laid on it as a question of Britain and the British Labour movement. This is essential to make clear at the outset, in view of the confusion sometimes caused by the attempts of a small section of those opposed to affiliation to seek to evade the issue and escape the responsibility of a decision here in Britain by transferring the question from the national to the international plane. With a curious reversal of their former role, a section of those opposed to affiliation have made play in public (notably in the last Labour Party Conference, and in recent inspired press paragraphs) with the idea of a British Labour Delegation to Moscow as the oracle and source of inspiration for the solution of the problems of the British movement, apparently hoping by this manoeuvre to burke a decision and to deprive the British Labour organisations of the right to settle their own problems in their own way.

It is therefore essential to lay down at the outset that the proposal of the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party is a British question, arising from the conditions of the British movement, and corresponding to the genius and traditions of the British movement. It could arise in no other country, because in no other country are the conditions comparable. In other countries the proposal of united action of Social Democracy and Communism could arise; and such united action is, in fact, in being in many European countries, under the harsh experience of Fascist domination. In other countries the proposal of unification into a single party could arise already—as it must eventually arise for all countries, including Britain, when the conditions are ripe. But only in Britain could this proposal of affiliation arise; because only in Britain we have this special federal form of the Labour Party, based on a combination of Trade Unions, Socialist organisations and individual members, with a continuously evolving programme and policy. We have here a unique oppor-

tunity to achieve a characteristically British solution of the problem of unity and difference, and to advance along a harmonious path of united progressive development, allowing for changing and evolving views within the movement, but avoiding the internecine conflicts which have dogged the steps of the movement in many other countries. We should be fools to fail to take practical advantage of this opportunity in Britain, because the more difficult and complicated problems of unity on the international field still remain to be solved.

Undoubtedly the international consequences of a favourable solution of the problem of unity in Britain would be far-reaching. A united British Labour movement would be able to exercise a powerful and beneficent influence in the direction of international Labour unity. But these are consequences which would follow on the achievement of unity in Britain. Unity, like charity, begins at home. The future of the British Labour movement will be determined here in Britain, by the democratic decision of the organisations which the British workers have built up. It cannot be determined in Moscow or Washington. The responsibility of decision is ours, and we must face our responsibilities.

The special questions raised with regard to the international affiliation of the Communist Party as a supposed barrier to affiliation to the Labour Party will be separately treated in a later article. For the moment it should be said that, when the conditions are examined in a serious and realist spirit, it will be found that the international affiliation of the Communist Party presents no practical difficulty in the way of the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party or of the fulfilment of its responsibilities within the Labour Party. The attempt to find here a source of difficulty is in reality a smokescreen for other grounds of opposition.

The wide response to the proposal of affiliation already expressed among constituent organisations of the Labour Party, national, district and local, which have recorded an opinion, indicates that the sense of a new situation and new needs is growing among thinking members of all Labour organisations. Within a few weeks of the opening of the cam-

paign, by the middle of February, support has been recorded from 6 national Trade Union executives, 58 Trade Union district committees, 628 Trade Union branches, 37 Trades Councils and 52 Constituency Labour Parties—a notable beginning when few organisations have yet met to record a decision.

A new generation has grown up in the Labour movement, to whom the old controversies, which weigh so heavily in the minds of many of the older leaders, are not even a memory. They have grown up in the conditions of the struggle against Fascism, with a burning sense of the gravity of the fight and the need of unity, with a deep admiration of the Soviet Union, its Socialist achievement and of the heroic example of hundreds of thousands of Communists facing death in our common struggle in many lands, and with a serious concern to measure up to the new tasks and problems brought us with the present war. There are from four to five million more organised workers to-day than there were a decade ago (eight and a half millions at the end of 1942 and rapidly increasing, as against a little over four millions in 1933, or a doubling of numbers), even though most of them are not yet in the Labour Party. For them what MacDonald, Snowden or Frank Hodges may have said twenty years ago is not necessarily the last word in wisdom. They are stifled by the existence of barriers and discriminatory regulations, derived from past controversies, for which they can see no present reason or meaning. They seek to shape new policies to meet new needs.

The older leaders on both sides have a profound responsibility to approach the present problems in a fresh and realist spirit, irrespective of previous viewpoints, looking not so much to the past as to the future, and above all seeking to understand the outlook and serve the interests of this new generation on whom will fall the brunt of the decisive struggle for Socialism. The past has no right to impose its prejudices on the future. Past mistakes on either side should not stand in the way of a present solution.

Political parties are not static. The Labour Party and the Communist Party, both sprung from the working-class movement and built up by the sincere efforts and sacrifices of workers striving

to find the path of liberation, have passed through many experiences during these past twenty years and have had the opportunity to learn much. Let us profit by our lessons. The older leaders of the Labour movement half a century ago bitterly opposed the formation of a Labour Party. But after twenty years of continuous struggle the Labour Party was formed. The older leaders in the the first stage of the Labour Party strongly opposed the adoption of a programme of Socialism. But a programme of Socialism was finally adopted after eighteen years. During the past twenty years the older leaders have bitterly opposed the recognition of Communism as an integral section of the working-class movement with equal rights, at the same time as more and more of the younger and more ardent spirits among the workers were moving towards Communism. Hence the tragedies of these past twenty years. Let us learn our lesson. Let us hope that, just as the old embittered controversies of the Lib-Labs and the Socialists which preceded the formation of the Labour Party have now vanished into the forgotten past, and only the outcome, the historical achievement remains, so, too, the no less embittered controversies of the twenty years during which it was sought to build an artificial barrier against the advance of Communism in the working-class movement with equal rights may also pass into a distant memory with the further evolution of the Labour Party, provided we rise to our present opportunities. The struggle of currents of opinion, of policies and tactics, cannot be finally overcome until a much more advanced stage of the movement; but we can learn to combine unity in action with differences of outlook, and the achievement of this is the condition of survival of the movement. The tide of the working-class movement flows forward always; and none can hold it back.

In this spirit of responsibility and a wider understanding, let us approach the question of affiliation, not from the standpoint of the demands or interests of any particular section, but from the standpoint of the interests of the working-class movement as a whole and of democratic advance in this country.

What is the present position? Can we be satisfied with the existing situation of the

Labour movement, and especially of the political Labour movement, in relation to the needs and possibilities? It will be generally agreed by all serious observers, of whatever tendency, that we are in fact faced with very grave problems, both of organisation (tendencies to stagnation, apathy, decline of membership in the older forms of the organised movement; growth of splitting attempts, such as the Commonwealth Party) and of policy (by-election policy, relations to the Government, relations of the Parliamentary Labour Party and Labour Ministers, and other questions); indeed, some members of the Labour Party have spoken of a crisis in the development of the Labour Party. Yet at the same time the movement of very wide sections of public opinion towards a socialistic or left outlook is outstanding at the present time. There is here a contradiction which suggests that something is wrong. The question is: does the issue of unity or disunity have a bearing on these problems? Would unity by the affiliation of the Communist Party assist in their solution?

Let us begin with the facts of the position in respect of organised numbers, the effective forces of the Labour movement. There has been a signal increase of working-class organisation in the most recent period; and it is rapidly going forward. There is no lack of health here; on the contrary, there is abounding life. Trade Unionism increased by 548,000 in 1941, and by 1,300,000 in 1942, and now stands at the record figure of 8,400,000. There are some six millions in unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. There are some nine million co-operators. A splendid growth in the mass economic organisations of the workers. Undoubtedly there are plenty of problems to be faced, in tackling the still continuing chaos of wide fields of Trade Union organisation; in securing greater unity and co-ordination; in extending organisation to the still unorganised majority; in drawing closer the workshop and the branch, district committee and union machinery; in strengthening Trade Union branch life and inner democracy; and in vital questions of policy. But the general picture is undoubtedly one of marked progress, of growing strength, vitality and activity, as instanced in the Joint Production Committees, the British Soviet

Trade Union Committee, the growth of shop stewards' organisation and link-up with the union machinery, the opening of the A.E.U. to women, steps to establish One Miners' Union and closer consultation of the three rail unions.

It cannot fail to be noted that this rapid growth and healthy progress has taken place precisely in the Trade Union field, where—with certain black exceptions—Communist and non-Communist workers are free in the main to work together for the common good of the organisation, with equal rights; and that this advance has been most signal in those unions which have refused to operate "black circular" methods against their members. Those best qualified to judge, the leading officials of these foremost progressive unions, where Communist influence is considerable and which have made most striking advance, are the most ready to recognise—even though themselves opposed to the Communist viewpoint—the part which the Communist members, whether as officials or as rank-and-filers, have been able to play in assisting this development. It is also significant that the weakest spot in the general advance of Trade Unionism to-day is in respect of the trades councils, where the Labour Party method of the "Black Circular" or exclusion of Communists has been most rigorously applied in many towns and centres, with the result that these once vigorous and lusty organs of local unity have been much weakened.

But if we turn from this general picture of the growth of the organised working-class, and advance of trade unionism and co-operation, to the political Labour movement, we find a different picture. Here we find a picture of decline, in respect of the active membership of the Labour Party, alongside a growth of political working-class consciousness and organisation outside the Labour Party, but with the net total falling far behind the level of development of the organised working-class movement as a whole.

The Labour Party in 1941 had (last 1942 Report) 226,000 individual members, as against 447,000 in 1937. Of the five and a half million trade unionists affiliated to the Trades Union Congress in 1941, less than two-fifths, or 2,230,000 were affiliated to the Labour Party, repre-

senting an increase of 193,000 on 1937 (inadequate to compensate the decrease in individual members). This very small increase of 193,000 trade unionists affiliated to the Labour Party between 1937 and 1941 is in striking contrast to the increase of one and a half million trade unionists affiliated to the Trades Union Congress between the same years: that is to say, the percentage of trade unionists affiliated to the Labour Party fell from 51 per cent. to 42 per cent., while the number of individual members fell by half. Finally, the number of members affiliated through the "Socialist Societies" section amounted to the almost invisible total of 2,908, contrasting with 49,800 in 1918, when the Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist Party were affiliated.

On the other hand, the Communist Party has 65,000 members, as against 12,500 in 1937—but outside the Labour Party, although as trade unionists paying the political levy. The significance of this total in the development of the political working-class movement in this country is outstanding, when it is borne in mind that the old Independent Labour Party, at the time when it held the key position in the Labour Party, with the majority of Labour M.P.s, had only 30,000 members, and at its highest point, in the years immediately after the war, 35,000 members.

What does this uneven situation indicate? It points straight to the sickness in the present position of the political Labour movement, underlying the problems of the Labour Party. The Labour Party was built on the alliance of the Trade Unions and the Socialist organisations, to which were added since 1918 the individual members. The individual members could not replace the role of the Socialist organisations, as was recognised in the Constitution of 1918, and as is still recognised in the formal structure of the present Constitution. But the Socialist organisations within the Labour Party have become to-day an invisible shadow. The alliance has temporarily broken down, or rather, has artificially been disrupted. The founders of the Labour Party recognised very definitely the indispensable role which the Socialist organisations must play, as the vital political campaigning force within the Labour Party, without which it would inevitably de-

generate into a federation of economic mass organisations, with their sectional interests, and individual politicians. But the successors of the original founders of the Labour Party have forgotten the lesson, and destroyed the essential basis of the Labour Party by their disciplinary actions. The active Socialist workers, who were organised in the Socialist organisations, have not disappeared; on the contrary, their numbers have in fact increased, in accordance with the growth of political consciousness of the working-class. An important proportion of the active Socialist workers, such as were in 1918 organised in the Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist Party, are to-day organised in the Communist Party (65,000 members, as against 45,000 members of the I.L.P. and B.S.P. added together in 1918). But they are artificially cut off from the indispensable role which they should be playing within the Labour Party, that is, within the political mass movement based on the economic mass organisations of the workers, by the refusal of affiliation of the Communist Party and the consequential rules excluding Communists from exercising their democratic rights as trade unionists within the Labour Party. *Thus the alliance, which was the essential basis of the Labour Party, has been broken. This is the heart of the sickness, the inner canker, undermining the vitality of the Labour Party. The alliance must be rebuilt. This is the essence of the question of affiliation.*

What are the practical consequences of this radically false policy, which is expressed in the refusal of affiliation of the Communist Party and the attempt to erect an artificial barrier between the Communist workers and the rest of the political Labour movement? The harmful consequences can be seen in concrete experience on every side.

First, the heavy collapse of individual membership of the Labour Party, which is the visible expression of the present political difficulties and the weakening of activity. The official explanations offered for this collapse on the grounds of war conditions, the call-up, and the difficulties of political activity in the black-out, etc., will not hold water. For under the same conditions, as we have seen, trade union membership has enormously increased, while the membership of the

Communist Party has increased five-fold, and its political activities have been intensified, despite the technical difficulties. Nor is the explanation attributing the collapse to the electoral truce adequate. During the past twenty months the Communist Party has also in practice observed the electoral truce; yet its main increase of membership has taken place during this period. The explanation attributing the collapse to the electoral truce is in reality only a reflection of the degeneration which destroyed the conception of a vital and campaigning political Labour movement and degraded the Labour Party to the role of a mere electoral machine, with the result that, when electoral contests are temporarily interrupted, all reason for activity appears to many supporters to have disappeared. The basic political explanation cannot be evaded, which must be sought in the whole line of policy pursued that has thwarted the development of a united, active, powerful political Labour movement, and that has found *organisational expression in the exclusion of Communists and promotion of disunity.*

Second, the harmful consequences can be further traced in the concrete conditions in any locality: in the problems of stagnation, apathy, frustration, etc., which are only too familiar. Every political worker in a locality, whether Communist or Labour, who is striving to achieve something and not satisfied with passivity, is constantly aware of the dead-weight of senseless, harassing regulations and prohibitions which paralyse the most elementary common action and take the heart out of the movement. Despite divisions on top, the local class-conscious workers constantly strive to co-operate; they are closer to the point of common struggle; united in the common aims of the working-class movement, united and fighting together as trade unionists, they naturally strive to co-operate in the political field. Then comes down the hammer from headquarters, the bans, the disruption of the common activity, the expulsions, the breaking up of organisations, and, in the extreme cases, the final dessicated "reorganised" official movement, with the life taken out of it. The townships of England, Scotland and Wales are littered with the wreckage of such experiences, which have left an ugly mark

with numbers dropping out, discouraged; only the most determined and clear-sighted resolutely carry forward the struggle to build up unity. Meanwhile, harassed officials of the Labour Party find all their time occupied in such heresy hunts, in place of building up the movement. If a volume could ever be written, setting down in a simple plain narrative the concrete record of the actual working of the segregation "black circular" system in every locality in the country, not a single sincere Socialist or class-conscious worker who could read it and ponder over its meaning could fail to be convinced of the absolute necessity of affiliation as the only common-sense solution.

The present position means that the life of the political Labour movement in many localities develops in two halves, each of which has an indispensable contribution to make, but each of which is incompletely effective without the other. On the one hand, the Communist Party Branch, with perhaps a hundred members in a smaller town, with some Trade Union support and a strong basis in the factories, with some middle-class support, conducting active campaigns and meetings—but cut off from the local Labour Party, which, though possibly less active, remains the recognised focus of the local Labour movement. On the other hand, the local Labour Party, with a larger nominal role of individual members, but able to call on few for any activity, with the affiliation of Trade Union branches (often much too few) but commonly with only formal contact with them, with no contact in the factories, with important representation on the Council or even dominating it, but with little role of the Councillors in the daily activity of the Labour movement, conducting hardly any campaign or only a few poorly attended meetings, and with the local officials often envying the enthusiastic voluntary support and well-attended meetings on which the Communist Party is able to count. Meanwhile, the overwhelming mass of the population of the town are not effectively reached by either. Is it not obvious that unity here (not merely of the handful of individuals on either side, but of the Communist Party and the Labour Party) would mean much more than a simple addition of forces? It would mean a completely new role of a united Labour

movement capable of becoming a real mass movement leading the whole life of the town in every phase, stimulating and drawing in numbers at present inactive, cynical or discouraged, and reaching out to numbers never touched by the present limited stage of the movement. Affiliation is not merely a question of two national parties: it means new life for the Labour movement in every locality in the country; the ending of frustration, bans and discouragement; the harnessing of the enthusiasm of all in the common cause.

Third, the harmful consequences of the present system extend not only to the political organisations, but to the Trade Unions. A simple example will make this clear. The South Wales Miners' Federation, let us say, elects the Communist, Arthur Horner, as their President: that is to say, they declare their confidence in him to represent them in vital negotiations, to conduct the affairs of their organisation and to be their spokesman. In the industrial assembly of the working-class movement, at the Trades Union Congress, he can speak on their behalf. But when it comes to the most important questions of all, the political questions, to be decided at the political conference of the same working-class organisations, at the Labour Party Conference, he is debarred from representing them, however much they may demand with the most unanimous voice that they wish him to be their representative. Is it not obvious that this does not mean merely the depriving of rights of the Communist, Arthur Horner? It means the disfranchising of one hundred and twenty thousand South Wales miners from their right to choose their spokesman at the political conference of the working-class movement. The intention may be to stifle the voice of Marxism; but it is the voice of the working-class that is choked.

Fourth, this inevitably means a dangerous tendency to separation between the Trade Unions and the Labour Party. The Trades Union Congress, with Communist representation, may reach a different viewpoint on policy from the Labour Party. If a union moves to a Communist outlook, it would be automatically excluded from the Labour Party if it endeavoured to send delegates representing its outlook. Thus the endeavour to im-

pose a doctrinal basis, alien to the working-class outlook, means to threaten to shatter the solidarity of the unions in the political field. At the present stage, the danger of the tendency to separation of the Trade Unions and the Labour Party is revealed in the critically low level of the political levy. It is a grave warning signal that, not the most backward unions, but the more militant unions, have the lowest level of payment of the political levy. Eight hundred thousand members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and eighty-five thousand, or one in ten, paying the political levy. Sixty thousand members of the Locomotive Engineers and eleven thousand (in 1941) paying the political levy. This is a scandalous state of affairs. Insofar as militant workers refuse to pay the levy because of disagreement with policies at present dominant in the Labour Party, this is a criminally mistaken line, because it means leaving a clear field to the policies with which they disagree instead of paying the levy and fighting for the policies which they wish to see adopted. But the main lesson here revealed is that the Labour Party has not yet won the majority of trade unionists to support it. There is alienation between the Labour Party and the mass of trade unionists; and the policies of disunity promote this separation. The establishment of a united Labour movement would create the basis for a most powerful campaign to increase rapidly the level of payment of the political levy to the Labour Party.

Fifth, the harmful consequences extend not only to the political work of the Trade Unions, but to their industrial work. The system of bans and exclusions, begun by the Labour Party in the political field, penetrates its poison also into the industrial sphere of the Trade Unions. This process began with the General Council's "Black Circular" in 1934. Although only partially operated, it has already done serious harm in some unions, and especially in the Trades Councils. Thus the political system of discrimination, begun by the Labour Party with the refusal of Communist affiliation and the exclusion of Communists or Communist sympathisers, inevitably extends, if it is not resisted, until it begins to threaten the industrial solidarity of the workers and the indispen-

sable basis of the Trade Unions as organisations of all workers irrespective of political outlook. This is, perhaps, the gravest count against the whole system.

Sixth, and most important, in the sphere of policy. At a time when the most vital problems of policy confront the working-class movement and require the full strength of the movement to reach a united solution, the refusal of Communist affiliation and exclusion of Communists prevents a common discussion and shaping of a common policy by the working-class movement as a whole. The Communist outlook on a given question may be right or wrong; it may be liked or disliked, criticised or approved. But the most inveterate opponent of the whole Communist outlook would have to admit to-day the plain fact that it represents the outlook of an important and growing section of the politically conscious workers. The attempt artificially to exclude its expression means to make the discussion of policy in the conferences of the organised movement lop-sided and one-sided, and less and less representative of the actual discussions in process in the living movement. The record of Marxism in this country on the major issues of the past twenty years gives it a right to be heard. One of the most important advantages of affiliation would be to make possible the fullest democratic discussion of the main problems of policy arising by the working-class movement as a whole, with a view to hammering out a common policy and acting in common on the basis of the policy agreed.

We have so far considered only some of the most obvious grounds in the practical experience of the movement which show the necessity of the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party as the most favourable condition for advance. But every serious line of approach, whether political or organisational, whether starting from the urgent tasks and needs of the present political situation or from the problems of organisation and development of the present stage of the movement, points more and more clearly to this conclusion as the way forward.

Why, then, is there opposition to affiliation?

The main opposition comes from that section of the older leadership who are most sincerely and seriously opposed to

the Communist outlook; who believe that Communist principles are directly opposed to what they regard as the principles of the Labour Party; and who fear the advance of Communism within the Labour Party. In consequence, they are so concerned to combat in every way and with every weapon the advance of the working-class movement towards Communism that they are not satisfied to leave it to the democratic decision of the movement, but feel it essential to exclude the Communist voice from being heard in the conferences of the movement or Communist participation from the common struggle, even at the cost of splitting more and more deeply the working-class movement.

We believe that this outlook is deeply mistaken, both in its judgment of the principles of the Communist Party, and in its judgment of the real interests of the Labour Party.

This direct opposition from the extreme right is supplemented and assisted by contrary fears and hesitations from the left, from some supporters of Communism and left Labour representatives. These fear that the Communist Party will be hopelessly compromised if it enters the Labour Party, that it will be bound hand and foot, that it will be able to give no expression to its viewpoint; they demand to know why the Communist Party "should attach itself to a corpse," declare that the Labour Party is "discredited" or "dying," or look to some new combination of the left to replace it.

We believe that this viewpoint also is profoundly mistaken, in its understanding of the present stage of development of the Labour movement in this country and the role of Communism within the Labour movement. They fail to understand the enormous positive significance and transformation that acceptance of Communist affiliation by the Labour Party would mean (a significance which is well understood by the Kemsleyite and Camrose press, that is, by the press of the most reactionary opponents of the working-class movement, who are most vociferous in the advice to the Labour Party to reject the affiliation of the Communist Party).

To clear these questions, it will be necessary to go a little more fully into

the problems raised: i.e. (1) the development of the Labour movement in this country, and especially of the Labour Party, and (2) the role and character of the Communist Party, in order to show why the affiliation of the Communist

Party to the Labour Party would represent the logical next stage, or most favourable next stage for the advance of the whole movement.

These issues will be dealt with in subsequent articles.

Casablanca and After

by QUAESTOR

THE Red Army is moving in battle to the west, changing the balance of forces on the Eastern front by the unprecedented losses and defeats it inflicts on the Nazis. By doing so, it is changing the balance of forces in Europe as a whole. The German conqueror and tyrant becomes weaker, the oppressed peoples struggling against his yoke become stronger. It follows as a matter of course that the situation becomes more favourable for an allied landing in force on the continent of Europe.

But the sinister fact is that, apart from some honourable exceptions, there never was such open hostility to the very idea of the Second Front in its true sense—massive attack on the Germans in Western Europe, where it would embarrass them most, strain their resources most, and arouse response from populations best able to strike effectively at the German rear. The very mention of the Second Front has vanished from the majority of the leading newspapers. Ministerial pronouncements become vaguer and vaguer on the subject. When Lord Beaverbrook ventured to raise the issue in the House of Lords on February 23, the parliamentary correspondents themselves were astounded at the violence with which his opponents attacked him. Lord Simon, on behalf of the Government, replied in a speech which was one long sneer at the very idea of opening a second front to-day, and which actually ventured to taunt the Soviet Union with having failed to "open a second front" in 1940—when it was neutral! Thereby, of course, the Lord Chancellor gave eloquent evidence that in his mind the Anglo-Soviet Alliance concluded in 1941 imposes no greater obligations on Britain towards the U.S.S.R. than the latter, as a neutral state, had towards belligerent Britain three years ago. But it is not this aspect which is most serious.

It must be plainly stated that the hardening of resistance to the Second Front demand dates from the Casablanca Conference—or, more precisely, from Mr. Churchill's account of that Conference in the House of Commons on February 11. There was something peculiar about the very structure of his account. It occupies just over twenty columns of Hansard. Out of this space, fourteen columns are devoted to U-boat warfare and the situation in the Middle East, three columns to generalities about the Casablanca and Adana Conferences, and two-and-a-half columns to the situation in the Far East. The question of military relations with the U.S.S.R. occupies a bare half-column, and that couched in the most trite and non-committal terms of official compliment. Yet this was at the time of the shattering Red Army advances, with the prospects they opened up for changes all over fighting and tortured Europe!

This remarkable self-restraint on the part of the Prime Minister was not accidental. In a passage of his speech which has received all too little attention, after regretting Stalin's absence from the Casablanca Conference, Mr. Churchill said:—

But I can assure the House that, although he was absent, our duty to aid to the utmost in our power the magnificent, tremendous effort of Russia and to try to draw the enemy and the enemy's air force from the Russian front was accepted as the first of our objectives, *once the needs of the anti-U-boat warfare were met in such a way as to enable us to act aggressively.*

This might have been interpreted as meaning merely that the first item on the Conference agenda was that of the U-boats, and the second the question of the Second Front. In point of fact, the press almost universally interpreted it in a much more far-reaching way—that there can be no question of a Second Front until the U-boat war has been won, or at any rate effectively decided. Out of very

many quotations which could be made, the following represent very different political camps, yet coincide almost to the letter.

The *Manchester Guardian* (Feb. 12) said:—

Mr. Churchill said that the Conference decided that the Axis should be attacked "on the largest possible scale and at the earliest possible moment." To that end it recognised that the scotching of the U-boat war must come first, and the determination to relieve Russia next. The order is necessary because the opening of new fronts is possible only if the seas are kept open for the immense movements of troops and material that will be necessary.

The *Sunday Times* (Feb. 14)—notoriously for its consistent opposition to the campaign for a Second Front in Europe—stated in its editorial:—

Anti-U-boat warfare, said Mr. Churchill, takes the first place in our thoughts; the British and American Governments have given it "the first priority in all their plans," and—an especially welcome assurance—"this was reaffirmed most explicitly by the Combined Staffs at Casablanca." Finally, the first of the distinctive features of this memorable Conference was "the recognition that the defeat of the U-boat and the improvement of the margin of shipbuilding resources is the prelude to all effective aggressive operations."

If these quotations from leading articles, and many others in the same strain which could be cited, mean anything, they mean that yet another excuse has been found for not opening the Second Front. It is worth recalling the long series of pretexts which have been brought forward ever since Col. Moore-Brabazon (as he was then) first enunciated the memorable doctrine that the Russians and Germans ought to be encouraged to cut each other's throats, since the weaker they were the stronger would be Great Britain. First, in the autumn of 1941, it was said that Britain had not enough trained divisions or tanks; but that the spring of 1942 would see a very different situation. The spring of 1942 came, the growing might of Britain's armies could not be hidden, and so it was discovered that what was really missing was shipping and an adequate air force. By the end of the year, things would be different. The Dieppe raid revealed inescapably the absolute mastery of the air held by the R.A.F. over the Channel; and the 850 ships used in effecting the landings in North Africa exposed the cynical falsehood that there was not enough shipping.

But the landings in North Africa, on November 8, raised a new set of problems, political as well as military; and it now became necessary to wait until the spring of 1943, when they would be solved, before a Second Front would be possible. Is it entirely without significance that Mr. Churchill, nearly half way through February, 1943, now raises a new obstacle—a new prepared line of defences, so to speak, in view of the possibility which then existed of a very rapid end to the Tunisian campaign—in the shape of the U-boat warfare, which has, it appears, to be conquered at all costs before there can be a landing in Europe?

Apart from the suspicious circumstances in which the new reason for delay is advanced, one observation seems imperative. That is, that of all the seas in which the U-boats might operate, the narrow waters of the English Channel, under the overwhelming grip of the R.A.F. and the innumerable craft of the Royal Navy, would seem the very least advantageous for the enemy, and the most favourable for the transport of troops and equipment to the Continent, once the landings had been adequately prepared from the air, sea and by combined operations. Whatever technical intricacies may have been used in the past to frighten off the common man from judging the question of the Second Front, by the parrot cry of "amateur strategists," millions of English men and women who know something about the crossings to France, through the very circumstances of normal life in these islands, are peculiarly well qualified to judge the suggestion that the German U-boats are the main obstacle to invading France and the Low Countries.

The question, then, arises inexorably, "What in fact was decided at Casablanca?" Naturally, the question does not refer to technicalities of exact place, exact date, or exact method: but it does refer to principles. Against a background of the gigantic victories, the question now must be put: Was it really decided to honour the obligations undertaken by the British and United States Governments last May, and to open the Second Front, at last, at a time when it will inflict an effective blow on Germany, and thereby shorten the war? And if not, could the decision be any other than the alternative,

namely, not to open the Second Front so long as it might help the Red Army, but to open it only when and if the Red Army weakens the Germans to such an extent that the entire Nazi system collapses?

This is not mere deduction. An event of considerable portent was the publication in the *New York Times*—organ of the most powerful interests of Wall Street, spokesman of the hard-boiled Republicans who recently won a substantial victory in the Congressional Elections, inspiration of the citadel of reactionary foreign policy situated in the American State Department—of an editorial—(February 14) from which the following characteristic extracts speak for themselves:—

Swiftly, inexorably, the Russian armies continue to drive towards the West. But as the Red Armies plunge forward they are also raising many questions in many minds as to what other order they have written on their banners; and the greater their victories grow the more insistent these questions become. Under these circumstances, it would do more harm than good to ignore them. The fears and suspicions about Russia are based primarily on two considerations. The first is that Russia will use Communist groups in other countries as instruments of ideological conquest. And the second fear is that the Power which has the greatest share of victory will also dictate the peace, and that Russia, having the power, will also use it for conquest, or at least for gaining "strategic frontiers."

In this connection, we cannot fail to note the *Washington Dispatch* of yesterday reporting that the Soviet Embassy is circulating an English translation of an editorial from *Pravda*, asserting an emphatic claim to Bessarabia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the ground that they are legally a part of Russia. This is a claim that our Government has not recognised. Against these considerations, however, stand others to which it is necessary to call attention for the benefit of Europe and the United Nations, including Russia herself. These considerations are based on the binding engagements, pledges and ideas, with which Russia has been waging a war of life and death on the political and propagandistic front.

Here the record is clear; and that record, embodied in pronouncements by Stalin and Molotov, in international treaties and agreements, shows (i) that Russia has obligated herself to conduct this war as a joint war of all the United Nations against Nazi Fascist aggression and to eschew any aggression of her own; (ii) that Russia has accepted the principles of the Atlantic Charter which provides for, among other things, "no aggrandisement, territorial or other; no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned; respect for the right of all peoples to choose the form of govern-

ment under which they will live; restoration of the sovereign rights and self government of those who have been forcibly deprived of them."

Binding Russian engagements to observe these principles were laid down in both the Anglo-Russian Mutual Assistance Agreement of May 26, 1942, and in the War Aid Pact between Russia and the United States of June 11, 1942; and it was on the basis of such acceptances that both America and Great Britain agreed to extend material and other aid to Russia—aid which she solicited, aid for which Stalin expressed public gratitude, and aid which helped to make the Russian victories possible.

Much could be written of the mingled insolence and hypocrisy of this astounding document. In its suggestion that the U.S.S.R. is preparing an "ideological conquest," it echoes the authentic accents of the Nazi radio, and recalls the years during which Chamberlain and Halifax justified their passive co-operation with the Hitler-Mussolini *bloc* in the piecemeal conquest of Europe by the argument that co-operation with the U.S.S.R. to stop them would mean a war of "ideological blocs." The article ignores the wishes of the peoples liberated from Rumanian and Polish oppression, against which they fought for twenty years, suffering innumerable sacrifices: setting against their will the fact that the United States Government has not "recognised" their decision. It has the audacity to appeal to the principle of joint war by all the United Nations, and to the provisions of the Atlantic Charter—after the disgraceful episode of North Africa! One might be tempted to ask the *New York Times* leader-writer, when did he protest against the fact that the Soviet Union—at least as much interested as the United States in the fate of France—was not consulted about the Fascist regime installed in North Africa.

But the essential significance of the leading article is that the great Soviet victories which prompted it do not suggest the conclusion that it is time for Britain and America to do their share of invading Europe. The Soviet victories only suggest to the *New York Times* that the moment has arrived for stirring up hostility to the Soviet Union on "ideological" grounds. At the same time, there are the very convenient commercial grounds so dear to the hearts of the Wall Street bankers who control the *New York Times*, which are expressed so blatantly

in the last paragraph: that the millions of Soviet lives sacrificed, the colossal destruction of Soviet wealth, can be balanced against the few thousand tanks and planes sent to the U.S.S.R. by the U.S.A.—a drop in the ocean consumed monthly on the Eastern front. However, this particular aspect need not shock us: was it not the same millionaires who invented the famous justification for demanding blood-money from the European peoples after the war of 1914-1918: "They hired the money, didn't they?"

It must not be supposed that the *New York Times* is alone in uttering these sentiments, so insulting to the American people themselves. The very same ideas were reported by the *Sunday Dispatch* New York correspondent (February 21) as animating "well-informed American circles," whom later he identifies as "many Government officials." According to the correspondent, they are pressing for a conference between Roosevelt and Stalin, in order to bring about a detailed understanding about post-war plans. "Americans wonder how the Finnish question and others like it will be settled" (not the question, as you might think, of how and when Hitler's ally, Mannerheim, and his army, which has been guilty of the same incredible atrocities in the U.S.S.R. as the Nazis, will be knocked out of the war). They wonder "whether the settlement will be made on the basis of power politics or of the Atlantic Charter. They wonder just what are Russia's peace aims, and how they line up with Anglo-American aspirations. They wonder, too, what the Russians envisage as the shape of Europe after the war." It will be noticed that the correspondent is a little more cautious in his choice of expressions than the leader-writer of the *New York Times*. But the implication of his message is the same.

Nor should anyone take comfort in the thought that such a detestable attitude is confined to one side of the Atlantic. The *Observer*, on February 21, featured a long article by "Liberator" (credibly reported to be connected with the Astor family, which owns the *Observer*), which substantially reproduced all the insinuations of the *New York Times*. The article bears the title of "Russia's Army and Europe's Fate." The Soviet Union, it says, is celebrating the present occasion with military triumphs which have few parallels in

history. And does "Liberator" suggest that it would be fitting to follow up these triumphs by fulfilling long-delayed pledges? Oh, no. "The hour calls for direct, unadorned speaking by the two chief European Allies of the Great Coalition"; and it must be speaking without "verbal frills or finesse." Like the *New York Times*, "Liberator" says it is the "political configuration" of the scene following a Red Army victory which dictates his present line of thought. The bogey of Red Russia, he says, is very real to some people. Very generously, he doesn't mind if the advance of the Red Armies brings political extinction to the Nazi leaders, the Bulgarian military, the Croat Fascists or the Hungarian landowners. But "there are other countries in Central Europe who will not democratically choose the Soviet form of Government, or direct or indirect control by the Soviet Government. The Austrian Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia and also Germany belong to this group. For reasons which need not be discussed here, these countries will not only be disinclined to enter into a Soviet sphere of influence, but there will be strong popular support for active opposition to the threat."

"Liberator" draws the conclusion that there must be no violation of the Atlantic Charter or "strategic frontiers." He waves aside Stalin's programme of the Anglo-Soviet-American Coalition, expressed in his speech on November 6, as "Europe knows only too well how words have lost their meaning." The real thing is to decide who will carry out the programme:—

If Giraud and Darlan were the men to do it in North Africa, who is to be chosen in Yugoslavia? The protege of the Soviet Union, or of the British Government? Who will take over in Central Europe; the nominees of the Hapsburgs, or of the Communists, or of the Allies, or the democratic delegates chosen by the people on the spot? Who will back whom, once the Nazi Government collapses in Germany, and the Fascist rulers break in Italy?

The cynical parallel with the *New York Times* article needs no underlining. It is worth noting, however, that "Liberator" is more outspoken in revealing the essential purpose of this blatant dragging of a red herring across the trail. He warns his readers that the Red Army may not be ready to proceed beyond its frontiers.

The reorganisation of the liberated Russian areas must take time. And during this pause the enemy may again mass his forces against us in the West. Our war, therefore, is by no means over. We may have yet to meet a bigger direct onslaught than we have anticipated. The enemy may not attack us directly, but *may prepare to bait us into an offensive, so as to strike back hard and so blunt our offensive desires.*

In other words, says this writer, the Second Front itself, for which the Russians are calling, is an enemy trap.

This appears in the newspaper of the Astors, who, perhaps, are not as influential in Britain as Wall Street is in the U.S.A., but whose connections in the days of Mr. Chamberlain have been shown to be extensive and influential enough.

Is it not a sinister coincidence that open propaganda to mobilise the people of Britain and America against the U.S.S.R. should be appearing at the very time when the Second Front demand is being

actively combated, and when the Red Army is changing the balance of forces in Europe?

Reaction is trying to change that balance in its own favour—though the pledged word of the Allies, and the benefits of the great Red Army victories, should be sacrificed in the process. That is the situation more and more clearly facing the peoples of Britain and America.

Marxists analyse tendencies, they don't claim the gift of prophecy. The intentions of the reactionaries may not necessarily be backed by adequate power. Success for the Astor "Liberators" and the men of Wall Street is not guaranteed. They can be defeated, and the correlation of forces altered still further in favour of victory over Hitlerism and its agents in allied countries. They must be defeated. The way to defeat them is indicated in the resolution printed at the beginning of this issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY.

Vansittart and the Labour Movement

by G. R. SANDISON

*Prospective Labour Candidate, Southend-on-Sea ;
Eastern Counties Organiser, Fire Brigades Union*

I RECENTLY received a letter from the secretary of a Divisional Labour Party inviting me to attend a Conference called for the single purpose of combating Vansittartism in the Labour Movement. The Conference was to be attended by representatives of the Labour Party and Trade Unions. Attached to the invitation was a copy of the "Cove Manifesto," of which more later.

Similar activity is presumably taking place in other parts of the country. Its development, together with the strong reactions caused by Frank Wolstencroft's speech at the T.U.C. last September, makes it necessary for all anti-Fascists to examine the issues raised and to adopt a correct policy. If this is not done, there is a danger that the Vansittart controversy may be used to confuse the movement and to divert attention from the more urgent tasks related to winning the war.

The essential character of Vansittartism is that it preaches hatred, not of German

Fascists, but of the entire German people *as Germans*. Three results follow from this main thesis. First, history is warped to prove that the wars of 1864, 1870, 1914 and 1939 were caused by the aggressive nature of the German people, without relation to economic causes. Thus the nature of imperialism and its inevitable drive to war is disguised from the peoples, lest they should seek to change it.

Secondly, Vansittart, having branded the character of all Germans, can see no way to change this character, and can only propose the indefinite holding in bond of the Germans. Logically he should propose their complete extermination—(a deduction already drawn by Dr. Goebbels and used to stiffen morale in Germany). Thus the underground struggle in Germany is stifled lest the German workers should make their revolution and unite with the workers of other lands.

Thirdly, Vansittart, by blaming a single people, the Germans, distracts attention from the vile system of Fascism,

which has allies in sections of the ruling class in every country except the Soviet Union. If the only enemy is the German people, there is no need to be vigilant against Fascist elements in this country and in America which have the same objects as the German Fascists. It is significant that some of the very gentlemen who helped to build Fascism in Germany and who supported "non-intervention" in Spain are now most vehement in support for Vansittart.

On these three grounds Vansittartism is dangerous and calculated to confuse the Labour Movement. The danger is not lessened by the fact that the doctrine is simple and easily adopted at a time when it is necessary to hate most bitterly those German Fascists who are trampling down everything which the Labour Movement loves.

What alternative is there? I believe that there is only one: the policy which has been consistently stated in the speeches of Stalin and Molotov and in all the propaganda of the Soviet Union. Here is the policy summarised by Stalin:—

Only the Hitlerite fools can fail to understand that not only the European rear, but also the German rear of the German troops, represents a volcano ready to erupt and bury the Hitler adventurers. (November 6, 1941.)

We have no such aim as to destroy Germany, just as it is impossible to destroy Russia. But the Hitlerite State can, and should, be destroyed, and our first task, in fact, is to destroy the Hitlerite State and its inspirers . . . (November 6, 1942.)

It is not our aim to destroy all the organised military force in Germany, for every literate person will understand that it is not only impossible in regard to Germany as it is in regard to Russia, but is also inexpedient from the point of view of the victor. (November 6, 1942.)

The strength of this policy is that it recognises and encourages the brave men inside Germany who are defying the half million S.S. troops whom Hitler is compelled to keep there as a safeguard against revolution. Incidentally, the report of the recent German Peace Manifesto (*Daily Worker*, January 12); the strikes by members of the "Organisation Todt" (*Reynolds*, January 17); and the frequent arrests for illegal activities are encouraging evidence of the activity of these forces.

To these gallant comrades the Soviet gives three important pledges. First, that they will not share the punishment which

will assuredly fall on the builders of the "New Order" in Europe, the perpetrators of crimes against innocent, unarmed people such as the world has never seen (Stalin says, significantly, "We know who are the men guilty of these outrages"). Secondly, they are told that it is not proposed to subjugate them and dismember their territory. "We have not and cannot have such war aims as seizures of foreign territories or subjugation of foreign peoples." Thirdly, they are encouraged to prepare for the use of military force to overthrow Hitler and confirmed in the possession of such force after the war.

In contrast with Vansittartism it is clear that this policy places squarely on the shoulders of each individual German the duty to redeem the crimes perpetrated in his name by himself sharing in opposition and sabotage of the Nazi war machine. Unless such redemption is promised the Germans will feel compelled to fight in desperation. This is the state of mind which Dr. Goebbels continually fosters by trying to identify the Nazis with the entire German people. Vansittartism is a pure gift to him for this purpose.

The final argument of Soviet policy is not a question of propaganda at all. It is the argument of tanks, guns, and shells. The mighty military and state machine of the Nazis represents the thick crust of the German volcano. It is probable that this crust must be smashed from without before the forces within can be liberated. In this sense the present offensives of the Red Army are a more direct aid to the anti-Hitler forces than any propaganda can be. Many comrades in Germany must see them in this light and be heartened. They realise that it is their fate, too, which is at stake on the Eastern Front.

Much more could be written and reference could be made to the broadcasts of Ernst Fischer and others from Moscow to Germany in which the obligation of the Germans themselves is made clear. I have, however, tried to give in outline the alternative between the reactionary doctrines of Vansittart and the correct anti-Fascist policy of the Soviet Union.

It cannot be said that we in Britain have realised this alternative. The British Government oscillates between Vansittartism and the mild but unspecific promises of Mr. Eden to secure the economic rehabilitation of Germany after the

war. In the Labour movement there is a mish-mash of conflicting tendencies and ideas. There is no doubt that the majority of workers are profoundly anti-Vansittart—witness the resolutions of protest from all quarters against Frank Wolstencroft's speech and the haste of the General Council of the T.U.C. to declare, that his presidential address was given in his personal capacity and did not represent the policy of the General Council. But this general "anti-Vansittart" feeling seldom includes an understanding of the alternative policy. It is often based on sentiment, unaccompanied by the knowledge and hatred of Fascism which alone can nerve us to the sacrifices necessary for victory.

On the one hand, without correct theory, it is easy to slip into Vansittartism when telling workers of the filthy things which some Germans have done and explaining the need for hatred of such bandits. On the other hand, the sound instinct of the workers to distrust Vansittart can easily be exploited by pacifist and I.L.P. elements to further their own ends. The latter tendency is the more dangerous in the present situation. For this reason it is necessary to deal with the document to which I referred earlier—the "Cove Manifesto."

The Manifesto is entitled "Against Race Hatred and for a Socialist Peace." It has 235 signatories, who represent a curious alignment. Of the twenty M.P.s who have signed, fourteen are Labour (including W. G. Cove, R. R. Stokes, S. Silverman, Rhys Davies and R. W. Sorensen), three are I.L.P. and three are Common Wealth. Among the remaining signatories the I.L.P. and Pacifists are in full force. But there are representatives of many other trends not usually associated together. Thus there are names like Alex Gossip, W. Howell (A.U.B.T.W.) Alex Kelly (Scottish Bankers Association), J. H. Potts (N.U.R.), G. D. H. Cole, Prof. Joad, Augustus John, J. B. Priestley, Victor Gollancz, Tom Wintringham and many others.

As the title suggests, the Manifesto is ostensibly a counterblast to Vansittartism in the Labour Movement and particularly to the "Fight for Freedom" Group of the Vansittartites. I use the word "ostensibly" with cause, because a careful reading of the Manifesto shows that its

apparent theme is used as a vehicle for introducing views and policies which have nothing to do with the Vansittart controversy.

The first and most striking of such views is the assumption that this war is identical with the war of 1914-18 both as to its causes and as to the aims of the belligerents. This view is achieved by the simple expedient of omitting from the Manifesto any mention of the Soviet Union, whose participation on the side of the Allies and whose explicit statements of war aims are completely ignored. Thus the Manifesto says: "To say that we must defeat Hitler as the aim of this war is to end in a mere negation. The triumph of capitalist imperialist democracy is not enough." So apparently we are to believe that the life of the first workers' republic is not at stake in this war, which is simply a struggle between Hitlerism and capitalist imperialist democracy.

Another familiar theme is implicit in this sentence, which is slipped into a paragraph pointing out that the Vansittartites are not the true friends of the British people. "There cannot be Imperialism abroad and Socialism at home; neither can there be Socialism at home and Imperialism abroad." If the words "in the Soviet Union," are substituted for the words "at home" it is, perhaps, easier to see that here is the familiar argument of Mr. Trotsky that Socialism cannot be built in a single country. One would have thought that this argument was a little threadbare after twenty-five years of Soviet Power over one-sixth of the world's surface.

The Manifesto goes on to give "A Socialist Programme" which should be applied *now*. The six aims include—The Restoration of the Land and its Values to the People; The Social Ownership of Banking, Power and Transport; The Establishment of a Socialist Britain as part of the United Socialist States of Europe, widening out to the Socialist Commonwealth of the World. The aim of the Defeat of Fascism does not appear; presumably it has no bearing on the task of achieving Socialism in Britain and in the world. Indeed, the Manifesto is more striking in its omissions than in its text. On the very question of Vansittartism, with which the Manifesto is supposed to deal, there is not a sentence devoted to

the alternative policy of the Soviet Union, which I outlined earlier.

I do not wish to be accused of doing injustice to the Manifesto by taking a few sentences out of their context. I recommend readers to get hold of a copy for themselves and to read it carefully in the light of Soviet policy and Soviet participation in the war. If they do so, I am convinced that they will agree that the Manifesto bears the imprint of the anti-working-class policy of the I.L.P., introduced very cleverly into an apparently sincere effort to combat Vansittartism. They may be equally struck by the analogy between the claim for immediate and complete socialisation made in the Manifesto and the similar policy of the P.O.U.M. in Spain when the enemy was at the gates. I wish I had space to

pursue further the fatal effects of this policy on the cause of the working class.

It should be sufficiently clear, however, that the "Cove Manifesto," and all it represents, should be subject to ruthless exposure in the Labour Movement, not least amongst many of the signatories themselves, who, I am sure, have not analysed the document with sufficient care. The fact that they signed at all is yet another example of the mood of frustration to be found in many members of the Labour Party and evidenced in opposition to the political truce and a general lack of orientation which makes them prey to wrong policies. This is what makes the question of a united campaign led by a united movement, to explain the war and lead us to victory over Fascism a matter of the most pressing urgency.

The Economic Crisis in India

by JOHN KNIGHT

INDIA has been hit by a threefold crisis: a political crisis, famine, and a general economic crisis. All three are inter-connected. The political crisis is well known everywhere, though it is not fully understood yet in its serious implications by all progressive forces. The famine which is spreading over India and which is costing the lives of hundreds of thousands is just becoming known outside India, though few yet comprehend its extent and seriousness. The general economic crisis is as yet being concealed, though its outlines loom large and menacingly already, in spite of the news black-out. It is on this general economic crisis that attention is to be focused here.

General economic activity has declined—in spite of the fact that, with Japanese aggression and conquests, war has come so much nearer to India. The index of trade activity, computed by the Indian economic weekly *Capital*, shows a decline of 7 per cent. in the middle of 1942, as compared with June, 1941; it is lower even than in June, 1940, when Indian war effort was just beginning to be geared up. Steel production in the summer of 1942 was at best as high, but probably lower than in 1941; the same is the case with pig iron production. Jute manufacturing goes on at pre-war levels, while

stocks of jute goods in the factories have almost doubled as compared with the preceding year.

Perhaps the most frightening figures, and at the same time the most accurate measurement of what is happening, are railway statistics. According to the official data (as reproduced in *Capital*, October 15, 1942) the total number of wagons (in terms of 4-wheelers) loaded from April 1 to September 20 on Class I railways was:—

	1941.	1942.	1942 less than 1941. Per cent.
Broad Gauge	2,391,886	1,991,987	16.7
Metre Gauge	1,127,516	907,322	19.5

Imagine: between 15 and 20 per cent. fewer wagons loaded in 1942, a year of infinitely greater military activities in India than 1941, when Japan had neither conquered Burma, nor even had declared war!

To make matters worse and the crisis more acute, at the same time contributing to a further intensification of the famine the financial system in India is almost in process of disintegration. The amount of notes in circulation has increased from December 26, 1941, to December 25 1942, by over 80 per cent. While general trade activity is declining, the note circulation is increasing. No wonder that Indi

is in the throes of a serious inflation. India is the first allied country during the present war to suffer from this curse of the poor. No wonder that the combination of food scarcity and general inflation makes prices go sky-rocketing. The cost of living rises by several per cent. from one month to another, and wholesale prices go up even more steeply. The most recent figures available, referring to August, 1942, show a general increase of wholesale prices in Calcutta of about 30 per cent. as compared with a year ago,

while prices for cereals, for instance, have risen during the same period by over 45 per cent.

These few data, incomplete and insufficient as they are, are more than is needed in order to realise the seriousness of the general economic crisis which has gripped India, a crisis which is partly caused by and in turn partly aggravates the political and the food crisis. It is absolutely necessary to overcome these three crises if we want to smash the Japanese Axis partner.

Pakistan and National Unity

by G. ADHIKARI

[Being the speech (considerably abridged) on the present national questions in India at an Enlarged Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, held in September, 1942.—Ed. L.M.]

THE question of national unity, of Hindu-Muslim unity, has always been before our country and therefore only if we see its evolution side by side with that of our national movement, can we understand it properly in its present phase. The question itself has gone through different phases of development alongside with the different phases through which our national movement itself has gone. However, only such an historical dynamic treatment of the problem can enable us to understand its significance to-day, in to-day's phase of our national movement. Old ways of looking at the problem, old solutions, still persist in our understanding, and quite naturally so. These tendencies, these outmoded ways of thinking, which really form the deviations of to-day, have to be brought out and nailed down sharply, not only in terms of principles, but also in terms of historical evolution, otherwise they cannot be rooted out. Comrades raise several doubts, several questions. Where do these arise from? From nowhere else except our own former approach to the problem before the outbreak of the war. That is why a historical-political review is necessary, a review of how the question of Hindu-Muslim unity is developed through the three different phases of our national movement. Only in this way can we understand the significance of Pakistan and of the demand for the self-determination of nationalities; only in this way can we understand exactly why these de-

mands have arisen *now at this time* and not before.

If we look back and examine the evolution of the problem, we find three distinct approaches to the problem in three distinct periods, each one corresponding to a particular phase of our national movement.

In the first and earliest period, it was the fundamental axiom of the national movement (which was itself in its earliest period) that India is one nation; the difference between the Hindus and the Muslims is only one of religion; the stronger the national urge among the masses of both religions grows, the sooner this difference will go off and Hindus and Muslims will grow together as one. At this period, propaganda for unity on the basis of nationalism against imperialism was considered adequate solution of the problem. Such propaganda was carried on by the Liberals in the earliest period of the national movement and the Liberals at that period were the leaders of the incipient national movement. The Liberals, who were the earliest nationalists, just argued: "What is needed to solve the problem is nationalist consciousness." This period lasted till about 1921, when it reached its culmination in the Khilafat-Congress unity.

The second period lasts from 1921 up to about 1936. In this period, with the further development of the nationalist movement, comes a further development of the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity

too, side by side with the former, in fact as an integral part of the former. In this period, the nationalist bourgeoisie grows, gets consolidated as leaders of the nationalist movement. Alongside with this growth, we find clashes and conflicts between the bourgeoisie of the two sections, arising side by side with this, as the other side of the very same process, the class movements of the workers and kisans grow up. Thus, we have two simultaneous aspects: one, clashes and conflicts among the vested interests; the other, growing unity among the rising movement of the kisans and the working class. The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity was, therefore, posed in this period thus: "The whole conflict between the two sections is confined to the bourgeoisie and the vested interests; the masses of either section have nothing to do with this conflict. Unite the masses of both sections on economic issues, on common struggles for economic demands, and the problem will be solved."

The third period begins from 1937, from the time of the Congress Ministries. This is the period of the developing offensive of Fascism on a world scale. On a world scale, the question of forging national unity for fighting against Fascism begins to come to the forefront, the United National Front policy comes into the foreground, the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity comes on the agenda.

On the other hand, with the sharpening of the war-crisis, the question of power comes to the forefront. It is this, the rapid sharpening of the war-crisis and of the crisis of imperialism, which makes the Hindu-Muslim problem assume a new form. At this time, the demand of the day becomes no more one of constitutional concessions, no more one of communal versus joint electorates, but one of power. The war-crisis poses sharply before the Indian people the problem of winning power. It is at this time that the Muslim League comes out with its demand for a separate state or states for Muslims. This is the new form in which the Hindu-Muslim question appears now, the demand of the Muslims for their own state. The agitation of the Muslims as "oppressed communities" is brought more and more into political controversies. The outbreak of war brings the problem of unity of the Indian

nation for winning power urgently on the agenda, simultaneously develops the controversy of "Pakistan versus the independence of India."

It is when we see the problem in such a historical-political perspective that we are able to distinguish three approaches to the problem and three corresponding aspects of it. Thus only can we see how each of three approaches arises from, and fits, a particular phase of development of our national movement. We are able to see the new development of the present period and the corresponding necessity for the proletariat to make a new approach to the problem to suit this particular development. . . .

It was in our Party Letter of May 1941 that we really took a basic advance step in this direction. Formerly in 1938 we used to assert that India was a *homogeneity, a homogeneous piece*. Our ranks looked at the problem in a *static, non-historical manner*. The Marxian theory of *development of a nation, that nationalities emerge and grow in the process of historical evolution*—this theory had not entered their consciousness. *Old attitudes, outmoded approaches, still persisted in their consciousness*. That is why some of our own comrades started quoting R.P.D.'s *India Today* against our Party Letter of May 1941. Palme Dutt had written these parts of his book as early as 1937 or so. He was describing the development of that time, he was not attempting to go beyond those problems. His object was to show the unity and one-ness of India *as against British Imperialism*, his object was *not* to go beyond this scope and to attempt a *historical charting out of the future developments in the national sphere*.

It is a static non-historical conception of a nation that lies behind most of the misconceptions and doubts regarding this problem within our own Party ranks. A nation is a historical product of bourgeois development and evolution—this is the basic starting point with which Stalin begins his classic article on the National Question. The idea that India has always been a nation—such an idea is *non-Marxian and has no basis in reality*. Such an idea was quite all right for the earliest nationalists, at a period when the nationalist movement was in its infancy. But to-day, to persist in such an understanding, is to *forget all the intervening*

years of historical development; is to be completely blind to the realities of the present situation.

In fact, Marx himself went to the root of the Indian problem when he wrote: "The foundation for the unification of India in a modern sense was laid by the British conquest." This foundation was laid by exploitation. It is this unification, unification in a *relative and historical sense*, that is taken by people as a fact *existing irrespective of history and of historical development*. In this sense, however, the controversy, whether India is a nation or not, is *wrong, and irrelevant*. The unity of the national movement is asserted and stressed by the fight against imperialism—it is this which has given the impress of national unity to India. It is this aspect which R.P.D. stresses in his *India Today*. This aspect is the aspect of governing the struggle of the Indian people as a whole against British Imperialism. It is an aspect of governing a particular relative sphere. It has nothing to do with assertions like "India is a nation like England, Germany, etc.," not in this sense.

A nation is *not a static concept*. Nations have evolved in history out of historical development, as bourgeois development rises and grows. The formation of nations, in the modern sense of the term (with their distinct characteristics, as outlined by Stalin), is a product of the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, by the epoch of feudalism breaking down and capitalist development rising. It is the spreading economy of capitalist development which creates the "national" consciousness and gives rise to the formation of nations as distinct entities. The spreading of commodity production, the growth of the world market and of money economy—it is these which necessitate the formation of nations as entities that can develop best in the capitalist economy, flower best under this economy and carry forward economic progress beyond this stage.

This national development grows in different forms in different countries, according to the historical peculiarities of development of each country. There are cases where different tribes are welded into a nation by bourgeois development. The classical examples of such cases are England and Germany—where there is a national homogeneity on the basis of one

language, one race, etc. But besides this type, there is also a second historical type, where national development takes a different form. In this type, the grouping together of various tribes by bourgeois development takes a *multi-national shape*. Examples of this are the Tsarist Empire, the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, etc. In this type of development, a dominant nation, with a high degree of bourgeois development, unites within its state boundaries various other nations, nations which have not yet grown to full nationhood, but which with increasing bourgeois development, find their national development thwarted and suppressed by the dominant nation and its centralised state. As the bourgeois development goes on, inside such a "multi-national" state, conflicts grow up. The various nationalities begin to acquire national consciousness themselves and this growing national consciousness begins to assert itself in the urge for separate political and economic existence.

Such was the picture of Tsarist Russia in the 1911-1912 period, the period when the national question comes up in sharp form before the R.S.D.L.P. It could not be said at that time that all the various elements inside Russia had grown to full nationhood. But this process was clearly visible, we find this process clearly described in Stalin's book. Each growing border nationality was pitching its own separate tent, was making its own separate camp. The national movement was rising up fast. We see in this period in Russia a classical example of the effects of bourgeois development inside multi-national states of new nationalities arising and radically revolutionising the entire political scene. The Mensheviks saw in this, of course, only one aspect of it—the so-called "disintegrating" aspect. The Bolsheviks were quick to see the "progressive aspect" and to use this to develop the revolutionary unity and activity of the masses of all the nationalities to a higher level.

We can thus see that within a multi-national state, historical development constantly brings into the forefront ever new nationalist urges, ever new cases of nationalist consciousness. Nationalities lie dormant within the womb of historical development, at a particular stage they acquire sufficient strength to assert

themselves, and then seemingly "new" problems crop up. . . . To have a static conception of a nation is to be blind to all such development, is to be *blind to historical development and reality*. Let us take the case of our own country. There have been different nationalities, not yet grown to full nationhood, lying dormant within it. Actually it was the foreign power, by its conquest and consequent shattering of all the old forms of economy, which actually started the process of "national" development. Before this foreign conquest, India was mainly of a feudal-village economy and therefore could not be called a "nation" in the modern bourgeois sense of the term. Before the British conquest of India, there was no part of India which can be described as a nation in the bourgeois sense. How then does this "national" development begin under the British in a typically *uneven way*? Such an uneven development had already set in even under a pre-capitalist economy, due to various historical and geographical causes. But this uneven development is *accentuated* by imperialism. *This accentuated uneven development, imposed by imperialist exploitation and by the imperialist imposed distorted thwarted forms of capitalist development*, gives rise in course of time to various problems. In certain parts, bourgeois development comes earliest; these parts naturally lead the national anti-imperialist movement and at that stage we ourselves were not conscious that we are actually a multi-national state. As bourgeois development goes on spreading and as the masses of the people and specially the peasantry in all parts of India wake up to political consciousness, then it is that *individual national movements begin to arise within the framework of the all-Indian national movement against imperialism*.

It was this unrest of the border nationalities, their democratic movement for self-expression within the broad framework of the struggle against Tsarism, that characterises the Russia of 1912-14. Bourgeois separatist movements arise in the border nationalities, seeking to take advantage of, and exploit, this democratic sentiment of the masses. As against this, the labour movement in the border regions led by the Bolsheviks seeks to combat this separatist tendency and to

unite all the nationalities for struggle against Tsarism. This is the crux of the national problem that came up before the Bolshevik Party in 1912. The Bolsheviks realised that only by recognising the *essentially democratic and progressive character* of this striving of the nationalities for self-determination, only by *conceding this as a right*, could they *fight the bourgeois separatist tendencies successfully and forge unbreakable all-in unity against the Tsarist autocracy*. The Bolsheviks demarcated clearly between two things: (1) the awakening to national consciousness of new nationalities, an awakening which was historically progressive and found its expression in the demand for self-determination; (2) the way in which the bourgeoisie within these nationalities were seeking to *take advantage* of this essentially democratic urge of the masses and lead it into their own separatist class channels. They realised that to grant the first is the only way to defeat the second and to forge a greater revolutionary unity of all the masses than ever before.

Similarly, here too in our own country, the problem of *unifying the different sections of our people against imperialism*, for the war of liberation against Fascism arises at a time when the spread of the national movement has aroused various dormant nationalities of our land to life, when new "national" urges are beginning to appear under this impact. Unless we recognise this fact, we cannot find the key to unity to-day.

It is when we examine the present period that the full force of *Stalin's* remark comes out before us: "*In the case of India, too, it will probably be found that innumerable nationalities, till then lying dormant, would come to life with the further course of bourgeois development.*"

We Communists recognise, and explain clearly to the people, two things: (1) The problem of nationalities can only be solved in a *firm and lasting manner* under Socialism when the disuniting factor of the bourgeoisie disappears; (2) But at the same time, a *partial solution* is also possible under capitalism, but only under *conditions of complete and full democracy*. The solution which the C.P.S.U. put forward in 1917 was one of attaining *complete democracy, of a radical complete democratic revolution*.

This is the crux of the problem which the bourgeois-reformists entirely pass over. The problem to-day is not a constitution-mongering problem of remaking boundaries. The question of communal unity must be seen as a *revolutionary question of forging revolutionary unity of all sections of our people to break imperialist-feudal rule. The breaking of this rule is the precondition to the people being able to remake boundaries in a democratic way.*

This is where the Communist solution is a *revolutionary solution* and is sharply demarcated from all constitution-mongering of the Liberals and the bourgeois-reformists. To try to wander off into ethnographic pastimes and boundary-making formulae is to *stray from the revolutionary path into the path of reformism.* The problem before us to-day is not one of drawing maps and making boundaries, but one of *forging the revolutionary unity of action of all sections of our people, to win the common war of liberation and to secure the common freedom of all.*

This is what is stressed in paragraph 1 of our Resolution. That our solution is *not a constitutional solution*, that the cornerstone of our policy is the *unity of the masses as the vanguard of the national movement.*

Our policy with respect to the Hindu-Moslem problem fits into this general framework. *This policy has to be sharply and clearly demarcated from (1) the stand of Jimmah and the separatists; (2) the stand of the National Congress leadership;*

(3) the stand of the Akhanda Hindustan-wallas. . .

It is necessary, in closing, to stress once again one important point—that is the crux of Communist policy. *The question of the self-determination of nationalities is to be looked upon as a political revolutionary question, not a constitutional question.*

It is the constitutionalist whose first question is: "Whether to separate or not." But Communists say: *When we grant the right of self-determination as an unconditional right, then this right becomes the hall-mark of sovereignty, of equality.* The way in which we should pose the question of nationalities is: *how shall we define the nationalities so as to create conditions where there will be the fullest and freest flowering and development of national characteristics?* We keep two aspects in mind, two aspects which cannot be separated: (1) *Right of separation;* (2) *Object of unification.* Our solution itself is *no static solution.* In the Soviet Union, for example, after the Revolution itself, a number of nationalities attained full-fledged nationhood in course of time. Hence, we steadily keep before ourselves the two criteria: (1) *the grant of the right of separation dispels distrust and creates unity here and now.* (2) *We should so demarcate the nationalities that in a free and democratic India, the nationalities will grow and flower, will develop towards Socialism.*



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The English Popular Masses

[On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Karl Marx on March 14, 1883, we print the opening passage of an article by him written for a Viennese newspaper over eighty years ago.—ED. L.M.]

A London Workers' Meeting

London, January 28, 1862.

THE working class, so preponderant a component part of a society that within living memory has no longer possessed a *peasantry*, is known to be unrepresented in Parliament. Nevertheless, it is not without political influence. No important innovation, no decisive measure, has ever been carried through in this country without *pressure from without*, whether it was the Opposition that required such pressure against the Government or the Government that required the pressure against the Opposition. By *pressure from without* the Englishman understands great extra-parliamentary popular demonstrations, which naturally cannot be staged without the lively co-operation of the working class. Pitt understood how to use the masses against the Whigs in his Anti-Jacobin War. The Catholic emancipation, the Reform Bill, the abolition of the Corn Laws, the Ten Hours Bill, the war against Russia, the rejection of Palmerston's Conspiracy Bill, all were the fruit of stormy extra-parliamentary demonstrations, in which the working class, sometimes artificially incited, sometimes acting spontaneously, now as a *persona dramatis*, now as the chorus, played the principal part or, according to circumstances, the noisy part. So much the more striking is the attitude of the English working class in regard to the American Civil War.

The misery that the stoppage of the factories and the shortening of the labour time, *motivated* by the blockade of the slave states, has produced among the

workers in the northern manufacturing districts is incredible and in daily process of growth. The other component parts of the working class do not suffer to the same extent; but they suffer severely from the reaction of the crisis in the cotton industry on the remaining branches of production, from the curtailment of the export of their own products to the North of America in consequence of the Morrill tariff and from the annihilation of this export to the south in consequence of the blockade. At the present moment, English interference in America has accordingly become a bread-and-butter question for the working class. Moreover, no means of inflaming its wrath against the United States is scorned by its "*natural superiors*." The sole great and widely circulating workers' organ still existing, *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper*, has been purchased expressly in order that for six months it might reiterate weekly in raging diatribes the *caeterum censeo* of English intervention. The working class is accordingly fully conscious that the Government is only waiting for the intervention cry from below, the *pressure from without*, to put an end to the American blockade and English misery. Under these circumstances, the obstinacy with which the working class keeps silent, or breaks its silence only to raise its voice against intervention and *for* the United States, is admirable. This is a new, brilliant proof of the indestructible excellence of the English popular masses, of that excellence which is the secret of England's greatness and which, to speak in the hyperbolic language of Mazzini, made the common English soldier seem a demi-god during the Crimean War and the Indian insurrection.

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Document of the Month

On Pakistan and National Unity

September 19th, 1942.

ALL-IN national unity, based on communal harmony and Congress-League joint front, is to-day an urgent and pressing necessity to solve the present national crisis, to win National Government from the hands of the British imperialist bureaucracy and to defend our Motherland against the Fascist aggressor. This has brought the controversy of Pakistan versus the unity of India sharply to the forefront. The Communist Party, therefore, lays down the main principles of the Communist policy on this issue.

1. The Communist Party draws together the toilers of all castes, communities and nationalities in common class organisations (Trade Unions, Kisan Sabhas, etc.). It unites them politically as the vanguard of the united national front for achieving the freedom of our country and democracy. This is the cornerstone of the policy of achieving communal unity.

2. To build the united national front of the peoples of the various communities and nationalities that inhabit India, for the defence and freedom of our country, it is, however, necessary to dispel the mutual distrust and suspicion that exists among them. This is a remnant of memories of past historical oppression and of present social inequalities arising out of the feudal-imperialist exploitation. For this purpose, the basic rights of the communities and nationalities must be recognised and they must be made an essential part of the programme of the united national front.

3. The programme of the U.N.F. must declare that in Free India, there will be perfect equality between nationalities and communities that live together in India. There will be no oppression of one nationality by another. There will be no inequalities or disabilities based on caste or community. To ensure this, the national movement must recognise the following rights as part of its programme for national unity.

(a) Every section of the Indian people which has a contiguous territory as its homeland, common historical tradition, common language, culture, psychological make-up and common economic life would be recognised as a distinct nationality with the right to exist as an autonomous state within the free Indian union or federation and will have the right to secede from it if it may so desire. This means that the territories which are the homelands of such nationalities and which to-day are split up by the artificial boundaries of the present British provinces and the so-called "Indian States" would be reunited and restored to them in free India. Thus free India of to-morrow would be a federation or union of autonomous states of the various nationalities such as the Pathans, Western Punjabis (dominantly Muslims), Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindusthanis, Rajasthanis, Gujerathis, Bengalis, Assamese, Beharies,

Oriyas, Andhras, Tamils, Karnatikis, Mahashtrians, Keralas, etc.

(b) If there are interspersed minorities in the new states thus formed, their rights regarding their culture, language, education, etc., would be guaranteed by Statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

(c) All disabilities, privileges and discriminations based on caste, race or community (such as untouchability and allied wrongs) would be abolished by Statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

4. Such a declaration of rights, in as much as it concedes to every nationality, as defined above, and therefore to nationalities having Muslim faith, the right of autonomous state existence and of secession, can form the basis for unity between the National Congress and the League. For this would give to the Muslims wherever they are in an overwhelming majority in a contiguous territory which is their homeland, the right to form their autonomous states and even to separate if they so desire. In the case of the Bengali Muslims of the Eastern and Northern Districts of Bengal where they form the overwhelming majority, they may form themselves into an autonomous region as the state of Bengal or may form a separate state. Such a declaration therefore concedes the just essence of the Pakistan demand and has nothing in common with the separatist theory of dividing India into two nations on the basis of religions.

5. But the recognition of the right of separation in this form need not necessarily lead to actual separation. On the other hand, by dispelling the mutual suspicions, it brings about unity of action to-day and lays the basis for a greater unity in the free India of to-morrow. National unity forged on the basis of such a declaration and strengthened in the course of joint struggle in the defence of our motherland is bound to convince the peoples of all Indian nationalities of the free Indian union or federation that will emerge after the war of liberation is won, for the common defence of freedom and democracy achieved and to build on that secure basis a greater and grander unity of India than our country has ever seen.

In spite of the apparent conflict and seemingly insoluble difficulties, the burning desire for unity is taking firmer hold of the people who to-day follow the Congress or the League. Under the stress of the growing menace of Fascist invasion and of the present national crisis, the leaderships of the two organisations also have moved closer together and in the direction of the very solution given in this resolution. There is no room whatsoever for defeatism on the question of unity. The Communist Party calls upon all patriots to join hands with it in popularising the principles laid down herein and thus speed up the realisation of Congress-League Unity, which is to-day the only path of national salvation for our Motherland in the hour of her gravest peril.

Book Reviews

Imperialism, War and Liberation

Collected Works by V. I. Lenin. Vol. XIX. 1916-17. (Lawrence & Wishart, 12s.6d).

LENIN HAS already passed into history and his stature, like that of Marx, becomes greater with the passage of time, as events confirm his understanding of the whole historical epoch in which he lived and in which we still live. So vehemently reviled by the bourgeoisie in his day, he is now tolerantly allowed by them to be a "great man," while ignoring completely what he taught. But the working-class movement will do so at its peril. Yet even now only a fraction of his writings are available for study in English. It is the more important, therefore, to take advantage of the appearance of this new volume of the "Collected Works."

From the point of view of immediate analogy, Lenin's writings during the early period of the life and death struggles of the Socialist state would excite wider attention just now and we still wait for them. The present volume, however, containing Lenin's writings in 1916 and the first part of 1917, covers a very fertile period of his creative output, of fundamental importance for modern Socialist theory. The writings included here deal especially with three groups of questions. The first is represented by his classic study of imperialism, written during the first half of 1916 and first published in 1917 after his return to Russia.

The second group of questions centres round the national problems and in particular the question of national wars and national self-determination. The third group relates to the decay of the second international and the problems of revolutionary working-class action during the imperialist war. Of particular interest here is the analysis of bourgeois pacifism. Naturally, all these three main groups are closely inter-related. In addition, the volume contains a number of special features, such as the splendid "Lecture on the 1905 revolution" delivered at a meeting of young Swiss workers in January, 1917.

Lenin's basic study, "Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism," occupies not much over 100 pages. But its length is no criterion of its importance, in regard to which it ranks next to Marx's "Capital" and of which, in fact, it represents the continuation. Like Marx's "Capital" also, it is the result of enormous preparatory work. Lenin's note-books and preliminary studies for it, which have been published in Russian, analyse nearly 150 books and over 700 articles. Marx lived during the progressive expanding stage of capitalism. He laid bare its working and indicated the path of its future development. Lenin lived during the period of capitalism in decline, the epoch of wars and revolution, and he carried forward the basic Marxist analysis in this

stage with all that it meant for the working-class. On this sure foundation he was able to guide the birth of the new Socialist state which has so strikingly justified the accuracy of his analysis and the power of his vision. It is as impossible to understand the imperialist epoch without studying Lenin's work, as it would be to understand capitalism without a knowledge of Marx.

In particular, Lenin analyses the causes, character and inevitability of imperialist war. This gives the connection with the writings on the war of 1914-1918. Lenin examines all the Socialist writings about the war and its aims, and unerringly exposes incorrect views, such as that of the impossibility of national wars under imperialism. It is precisely here that some of the most striking allusions to future development can be found.

Thus, Lenin repeatedly points out the possibility of an imperialist war becoming transformed into a national war. In one place he makes the following pregnant analysis of possible development:—

"If the *European* proletariat were to remain impotent for another twenty years; if the present war were to end in victories similar to those achieved by Napoleon, in the subjugation of a number of virile national states; if imperialism outside of Europe (primarily European and Japanese) were to remain in power for another twenty years without a transition to Socialism, say, as a result of a Japanese-American war, then a great national war in Europe would be possible. This means that Europe would be thrown back for several decades" (pp. 203-4).

It is precisely the subjugation of a number of European states, and the throwing back of Europe (outside the U.S.S.R.) for decades that were the fruits of the "wasted years" since the last war.

Lenin points to another aspect of the present war when he insists that, in a war waged by the bourgeoisie to crush the victorious proletariat of a Socialist country, "if we waged war under such circumstances, it would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for Socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie." (p. 364.) In fact, not only has the role of the Soviet Union transformed an imperialist war into a national war of liberation, but it is precisely the Soviet stand that is making possible the liberation of the oppressed nations of Europe. Nor should Lenin's remark be forgotten that while "all national oppression calls forth the resistance of the *broad masses* of the people," nevertheless "frequently the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations *merely talks* about national revolt, while in actual practice it enters into reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nations behind the backs of, and *against*, its own people." (p. 248.)

It is impossible, in a few words, to do justice to Lenin's writings on national self-determination, bourgeois pacifism, disarmament, the views of

"left" and "right" Social Democrats on the war, etc. All Lenin's writings are polemical in form, mercilessly exposing, in the light of Marxism, all incorrect and vague theories. It is, above all, necessary to learn from Lenin, not only the basic foundations for Socialist work in our epoch, but how to fight and conquer.

CLEMENS DUTT.

The Strategy of Coalition Warfare

The Great Offensive by Max Werner (Victor Gollancz, 7s6d).

MAX WERNER has an unusual background for a military writer and critic. He has not studied strategy and tactics at a military academy nor has he had practical experience on the battlefield. His background is the Labour movement and during the past ten years its struggle against Fascism.

His studies of Nazi Fascism led him, before the outbreak of the war, to a correct view about Hitler's plans for world domination and to an analysis of Germany's war capacity, which he compared with that of the European countries. They are laid down in his first book, *The Military Strength of the Powers*. It was very valuable, because it showed during the period of appeasement the whole danger of Hitler's War Machine for Europe and stressed at a time, when politicians and "strategists" sneered at the badly equipped and unskilled Red Army, its strength and material resources.

Max Werner's new book, *The Great Offensive*, which was concluded in mid-August, 1942, and contains a foreword, written on December 19, 1942, is the practical confirmation of his views about the Red Army, which he repeated after *The Military Strength of the Powers* in his second work, *Battle for the World*.

In *The Great Offensive* he gives a clear estimation of the strategic perspective for 1943, based on his correct valuation of the powerful military and industrial reserves of the Soviet Union, which, in his own words, "has laid the military groundwork upon which Allied victory can be built," and comes to the conclusion of the necessity of a Second Front in the west.

He emphasises very strongly that the victorious offensive of the Red Army and the Allied operations in North Africa are opening up a "new vista for the Allied War of Coalition" and "that the military achievements of the Red Army should be considered not only as the defence of the Soviet Union." They have, in fact, provided the Allies with the opportunity to win the war within a relatively short time. From this point of view he analyses the military importance on the North African theatre of war within the framework of a coalition war strategy:—

"The North African front is not yet a real Second Front. That is to say, it is not a front on the European continent directed against important forces of the German Army. The

North African front is a third front. It cannot be assumed that a Second Front in Europe can be established from North Africa alone. . . . From the south Hitler's system of defence can be outflanked, but a simultaneous assault from the British Isles cannot be avoided."

But Max Werner errs and underestimates the strength of German Fascism when he believes that "the war can be won with relatively additional effort." Germany is mustering all its remaining man-power and industrial resources for the defence of the fortress Europe; it is undoubtedly preparing for offensive sorties, perhaps at the western end of the Mediterranean. The latest operations of Rommel in Southern Tunisia have shown how quickly the Afrika Korps recovered after its defeats in Egypt and Libya. It is essential that all the powerful forces and resources of the western Allies of the Soviet Union will be brought in to battle against the common enemy in the west.

Max Werner's description of the various campaigns on the eastern front from June, 1941, to spring, 1942, and of Soviet strategy and tactics during that period is amongst the best that have so far appeared outside of the Soviet Union. He repeats, however, the mistake of many military writers in calling certain prepared defences in the rear of the old Soviet border the "Stalin Line." Those fortifications had not the character of static defences similar to the Maginot or Mareth Lines. They were rather fortified key points which played a considerable part within the active defence in depth tactics of the Red Army and never did bear the name "Stalin Line."

When the author wrote the last chapters of his book dealing with the German offensive of the summer, 1942, the trend of the battle was, perhaps, not so easy to recognise. So he analysed it wrongly as a "race to the Caucasus." But it is now well established and supported by German documents which fell into the hands of the Red Army, that the aim of the German offensive was to break through to the Volga and to outflank Moscow from the south-east and that the Caucasus drive was subsidiary.

Apart from these weaknesses *The Great Offensive* is an extremely valuable contribution to the full understanding of the great change in the strategic situation, which the historic victories of the Red Army have brought about, and of the urgent necessity to open without delay and in full strength the Second Front in the west.

HANS KAHLE.

History in Blinkers

The British Empire, 1815-1939 by Paul Knaplund. (Hamish Hamilton, 18s.)

THE AUTHOR of this book has presented a quarter of a century's research in the history of the British Empire. With 31 maps and the 850 pages he has gathered an enormous amount of factual material on every aspect of this immensely important subject. Important because, at this moment of crisis when the menace of Fascism

threatens the world, we are still unable to win full confidence of the colonial peoples and the full participation of these peoples in the fight against this menace.

Paul Knaplund has managed to write an apology for British Imperialism. It is difficult to understand how a history of the British Empire can be written without reference to the monopoly control of raw materials and export of capital to the colonies and India, and the effect of this on those countries. On the question of the British Empire, the effect of big combines and trusts, such as Unilever Ltd., Imperial Chemical Industries, The Standard and Royal Dutch Shell in the oil industry, is decisive. Investments in the colonies bring profits to the capitalists out of the exploitation of colonial workers and peasants. To safeguard the capitalist interests control must be maintained over the machinery of state of the colonial country. Any reference to this deciding factor is missing from Paul Knaplund's history.

The question of how industrial development has been retarded in the interests of finance capital and the effect on the colonies and India is not dealt with. Further, no picture is given of the results of this policy of exploitation which has impoverished the colonial countries.

The book is a compilation of events and presented showing the British Empire in the best possible light to show progress made since the slave-owning days. Even so, the appalling conditions have to be brought out. In respect of the West Indies a Government Commission was sent out in 1939. The Government refused to publish the report of this Commission, which it made on its return to this country. Major-General Sir John Orde Browne, who went to the West Indies to investigate labour conditions in 1938-9, reported that he found "that Trade Unions in the modern sense were practically unknown and that only a few of these colonies had regulations concerning the employment of women and children, hours and conditions of labour, minimum wage, and workmen's compensation." (p. 657.)

In dealing with India (p. 785): "For the five years 1931-1935 the Indian birth rate averaged 34.5 and the death rate 23.5 per thousand. While these are not much higher than similar rates in

eastern European countries, the corresponding figures for New Zealand are 19.7 and 8.6. It has been computed, however, that since 1900 life expectancy in India has risen from 23 to 26½ years." So expectancy of life has risen to 26½ years. In this country it is about 60 years.

On the question of education, we are told by Paul Knaplund that the number of Indian Universities has increased from four in 1914 to eighteen in 1938. While we are given figures in respect of student enrolments, we are not told that the census taken in 1911 showed 94 per cent. of the population as totally illiterate, or that in 1931 total illiteracy was 92 per cent. and in 1941 was 89 per cent. Progress in removing illiteracy over the past thirty years has been almost negligible. Contrast this with the Soviet Union, where in 1917, when the Soviets came to power, there was from 80 to 90 per cent. illiteracy ("there was 72 to 80 per cent. illiteracy in European Russia, rising to 99.7 per cent. in some of the Asiatic Provinces"—Beatrice King, *Education in the Soviet Union*) and where it is now practically abolished.

The stages of Indian history since 1815, as represented in this book, might easily have been written by an India Office official. To read here about the Government of India Act 1935, one would get the impression that with the operation of the Federal Government, India would have independence.

Some of the book's worst features are shown when the National Liberation Movements are touched upon. The following quotation is an example: "Still, the Anglo-German conflict of 1939 supplied the National Party (National Congress) with opportunities to demand fresh concessions." This is a complete distortion of the facts. The Indian National Congress did not demand further concessions—it simply reiterated its demands, made on many occasions for a number of years past.

Mr. Paul Knaplund's twenty-five years of research into the history of the British Empire between 1815 and 1939 have been largely wasted because of his inability to understand the question in its fundamentals and secondly because of his attempt to apologise for the operation and effect of imperialism in the colonial countries.

BEN BRADLEY.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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NEWS TO THE GROUPS.—Our generous donor of the Bound Volumes to the best Group last year has again come forward with another offer. As a stimulus to the Groups to help the Development Fund he is offering books to the value of **SIX GUINEAS** to the Groups making the best collections for the Development Fund. As our Groups are so varied, both in size and content, we are organising the competition in order that all Groups have a fair chance, and additional consolation prizes have been added. All particulars have been sent to the Groups, and will be sent to all new Groups.

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